The Dissertation Committee for Brendan Christopher Gaughen certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Practices of Place: Ordinary Mobilities and Everyday Technology

Committee:

Jeffrey Meikle, Supervisor

Steven Hoelscher

Paul Adams

Sharon Strover

Craig Campbell

Practices of Place: Ordinary Mobilities and Everyday Technology

by

Brendan Christopher Gaughen, B.A.; M.A.

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Practices of Place:

Ordinary Mobilities and Everyday Technology

Brendan Christopher Gaughen, Ph. D.

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Supervisor: Jeffrey Meikle

This study examines four distinct ways people have encountered and interacted with place and explores how these experiences are impacted by certain technologies, paying close attention to the human experience of mobility. A fundamental idea in this study is that mobility is a crucial component to human identity and it is too limiting to view mobility as an abstraction absent of lived experience, as many postmodern theorists have done. Viewing mobility as an interrelation between people, place, and technology that shapes human beings and the physical environment, this study seeks to show how certain interactions with place contribute to a sense of self and identity for the individuals and communities discussed therein.

The primary attempt in this study is to demonstrate how and why place is used in different ways by different people through various acts of mobility. Many of these practices, I believe, emerge as a response to postmodernity, even if their participants are unaware of larger structural processes. These practices are attempts to create stable meanings, definitions, and identities, to make known the unknown, to provide people with a sense of agency and autonomy, and give aspects of permanence to the ephemeral all in order to resist the destabilization, uncertainty, and powerlessness that exist in the present. Employing strategies such as bricolage and poetics, the human actors described in this

study employ various practices of place in order to create meaning for themselves and the places they inhabit.

This interdisciplinary project contributes to discourses of human geography, digital humanities, and material culture by locating previously unexplored intersections and relationships between place, practice, mobility, technology, and the human experience of being in place.

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Introduction

In July 2015, Google announced the launch of a mapping feature they called *Your Timeline* that has the ability to show everywhere you've been (or at the very least where your smartphone has been). The feature claims to provide automatic commute predictions and improved search results based on locations visited and routes traveled in the past. While there are justifiable concerns about Google knowing our movements (from road trips to the places we shop), there really isn't anything fundamentally new about this—people have been tracing lines on physical maps for a long time—but the ability to have the physical trace recorded automatically, often without our knowledge or consent, *is* new. This underscores a larger idea running throughout this study: that often what is thought to be a "new" practice isn't really new at all – advances in technology often merely add dimensions to existing practices. What developments like *Your Timeline* do allow, however, is for us to expand and enhance our interactions with the physical world and our experiences of being *in place*.

To some extent, this has always been one of the central functions of mapping. Most maps graphically represent the physical environment (therefore allowing us to place ourselves within it) but as Jean Baudrillard's discussion of Borges's imaginary 1:1 scale map demonstrates, the map is not the territory; the sign is not the referent.[1] Michel de Certeau mentions that during the growth of modern scientific discourse from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, "the map has slowly disengaged itself from the itineraries that

[1] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), 1-3.

were the condition of its possibility."[2] While early medieval maps were prescriptive, suggesting routes and schedules for undergoing pilgrimages, mapping became increasingly more descriptive during these centuries, representing landforms and political boundaries, serving colonial powers, and deemphasizing individual narratives. Maps, according to de Certeau, became less about the human and more about the rational physical world.

What maps allow is a somewhat objective record of the human interaction with place (I say "somewhat" because as Denis Wood shows, maps are subject to selectivity, limitation, and ideological bias).[3] Even during the time frame in which de Certeau claims mapping became less concerned with human mobility than with accurately representing the physical environment, maps still never fully lost their function as documents of human mobility—Seventeenth-century Dutch mapmaker and engraver Claes Visscher created a map documenting the first-century route of the Apostle Paul in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the nineteenth century, railroad maps showed the extent of a growing transportation system, implying that tourists could go anywhere along the network as long as they could afford the ticket. Today, the road atlas allows for vicarious journeys on paper, tacitly inviting us plan future travels.

In addition to being how we find our place, maps are how we document the past. The purpose of a road atlas may be to aid in planning future travels, but certainly many map owners have done the opposite and used them for documenting old vacations or road trips, transforming a road atlas into a visual reminder of the past.[4] In other words, maps

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[2] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 120.
[3] Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (New York: Guilford Press, 1992), and his updated exploration, *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (New York: Guilford Press, 2010).
[4] See Christopher Norment, *In the Memory of the Map: A Cartographic Memoir* (Iowa City: Iowa Univerity Press, 2012.

have been interactive for centuries and Google's *Your Timeline* allows us to do something many of us have always done: mark lines on a map to document the places we have been. Marking a map is a way to reinforce a sense of personal control over space and to transform the unknown into the known. If this marking is done to record past travels, as I believe much of it is, it becomes a way to give ephemeral movements a sense of permanence. This use of maps is inherently self-centered: mapping our past travels gives more importance to the places we have been than the places we haven't.

To extend this metaphor, knowing where we've been is an important factor in knowing who we are. In addition to exploring factors leading up to the present, this study describes a matrix of interactions among people, places, practices, and technologies that all ultimately impact the meaning of being *in place*. The acts of mobility explored in each chapter are how people ascribe meaning to places, technologies, and their own identities. The examples discussed in this study all point to the fact that the ways people encounter place are shifting as new applications of technology allow for the physical environment to be used in ways commonly thought to be new: as a site that provokes memory and nostalgia, as a tangible object contributing to a sense of identity, as a canvas for creating legible traces of existence, and as a setting for locating the self. As this study shows, the practices described in each chapter are new manifestations of existing interactions with place.

For the most part, each of these practices are ways people reassert a sense of autonomy and resist forces of destabilization and dehumanization that characterize postmodernity. These acts of mobility are undertaken in order to provide a sense of certainty for individuals and the places they inhabit. As Entrikin writes, "the significance of place in modern life is associated with the fact that as actors we are always situated in place and period and that the contexts of our actions contribute to our sense of identity and thus to our sense of centeredness. In this way, the study of place is of fundamental importance to our understanding of modern life."[5] Examining ordinary places can sometimes reveal extraordinary insights.

Entrikin argues understanding of a place cannot come solely from an objective, scientific perspective, nor solely from the subjective realm of experience. Instead he identifies a middle ground for determining and evaluating place between objective and subjective, centered and decentered, scientific and existential. This synthesis that he locates in *narratives* of place eases tensions between "particularizing and universalizing discourses in the understanding of place."[6] Too objective of a description and a place becomes little more than a geometrically-defined space on a map; too subjective and place only has meaning for a single individual or small group.

This study is concerned with how people have gone about creating new meanings for the places they inhabit and traverse. These processes and practices are mediated by various technologies which are covered in each chapter. Because there is an emphasis on human experience in place (while not treating these experiences as universal), I intend to avoid discussing technology and space as concrete and precise entities in ways that risk ignoring the human element. For the same reason, I discuss human actors as having some measure of agency, preferring to highlight the importance of lived experience rather than describe people that exist merely as subjects of totalizing structures of power.

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[5] J. Nicholas Entrikin, *The Betweenness of Place: Towards a Geography of Modernity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1991), 4.
[6] Ibid, 3-4.

What follows in these pages is unusual in many ways and it may be helpful to describe this project's boundaries. While I acknowledge that technology often shapes social structures and values, these chapters are not primarily about technological determinism. The mobile individuals (distinguished from the abstract *bodies* described in some post-Foucauldian literature) cannot rightly be called *tourists* even though many of the places they visit in chapter two are widely classified as tourist destinations. Various aspects of transportation appear in each of the four chapters but the focus is on how people use these systems, often in ways that are different from their intended purposes. There is an examination of practices of collecting in the second chapter but it is not primarily about objects or materiality. And while the concept of *place* is present throughout each chapter, this study is primarily concerned with the experience of being *in place*. In short, this project is not entirely about one single event, concept, or idea. Instead, I seek to identify connections between place, landscape, identity, mobility, and technology, uncovering a network of meanings embedded in their combinations.

To uncover these intersections, I rely on a combination of methods of inquiry. Much of the foundation lies in examining primary and secondary published sources, and these findings are informed by examining archival material, having the watchful eye and ear of a journalist, and in some cases, active participation (though I hesitate to use the term "ethnography" for a variety of reasons). It is a truly interdisciplinary project aiming at a cultural history of the ways new technologies have impacted the human relationship to place and landscape. Consistent with what I consider to be one of the fundamental qualities of American Studies scholarship, I intend to complicate the reader's understanding of places and practices they may not have considered before. In the analytical spirit of Walter

Benjamin, I seek to read closely, to find the extraordinary in the mundane, and to find connections among things that may not, at least on their surface, seem connected. This study examines events, places, and practices to discover new meanings and relationships among them. And as any close reading should reveal, there is always more than what first appears. While some of the subjects of inquiry may not seem to be related at first glance, there are four main categorical threads running throughout this project.

The first of these is place. Following the articulations of Yi-Fu Tuan and others, *place* is contrasted against *space*. Place is subject to subjective, individual determination and meaning, mapped onto the objective realities of abstract, mathematical space. Place, and especially the experience of existing in and interacting with place, is an important factor in the construction of identity. Landscapes are continually made and remade by our interactions with them, and through the experience of being *in place*, we shape landscapes as they shape us.[7] It is this view of place, centered on human experience, that underlies much of what follows.

Another subject is mobility. Each of the four chapters deals with different aspects of mobility, a concept used to describe the human body moving through space. In *Mobilities*, John Urry describes what he calls "mobile worlds" consisting of different mobilities as bodies move along various transportation networks and "mobility systems." These systems, according to Urry, are becoming increasingly complex, interdependent, reliant upon computers and software, and vulnerable.[8] While Urry focuses on the systems and networks themselves (seemingly at the expense of actual human beings), Tim

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[7] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977. See also Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) and Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
[8] John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 14.

Cresswell takes a more humanistic approach, starting with the lived experiences of people, often in intimate spaces, and the ways they have negotiated these systems and circumvented their limitations.[9] I align more with Cresswell in this project, preferring to centralize human figures and actors.

This work also deals with the roles new technologies have played in affecting not only the ways we move through space, but the reasons we do so in the first place. As new technologies are introduced into daily life (and as their applications continue to multiply), our relationship to place changes and adapts. Interfaces such as Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers, online platforms that allow travelers to map their journeys, punitive monitoring devices, and systems of transportation such as railroads and highways all in their own ways profoundly impact how we interact with space, place, and landscape.

Finally, one thread running throughout this project is de Certeau's concept of "practice" or notions of strategy and tactics that he connects to bricolage and consumption as a response to social and economic conditions.[10] Fundamentally, this is a discussion about the things people *do*: the behaviors and actions that provide participants with meaning and fulfillment in order to create a sense of purpose and permanence in a world marked by increasing instability, fluidity, and uncertainty. Using de Certeau's discussion of bricolage as a guidepost, this study examines how communities of individuals take existing spaces, places, technologies, and transportation networks, remaking them to suit their own purposes and desires.

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[9] Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (London: Routledge, 2006).
[10] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xi-xxiv.

The first chapter, "Navigating the Roadscape: Performing the Past Along the Lincoln Highway," begins with a discussion of the historical development of American transportation systems, identifying their tendencies to create their own categories of landscape. I use definitions of landscape to theorize the road as a *roadscape*—a distinct place in itself not bound by physical or regional geography. This type of vernacular landscape, to borrow a phrase from John Brinckerhoff Jackson, is a site that facilitates nostalgia for a very particular vision of the past that crowds out competing narratives about historical automobility.[11] These visions neglect to acknowledge the extraordinary difficulty of long-distance automobile travel up through the mid-1920s, nor do they take into account the inherent privilege of driving in the mid-twentieth century. Following Marita Sturken, these efforts to remember the past are simultaneously a form of forgetting.[12]

This chapter follows the lifespan of the Lincoln Highway through development, use, obsolescence, neglect, nostalgia, and preservation. Interest in these older networks of highways increased significantly since the completion of the Interstate Highway System in the 1970s and the Lincoln Highway, as the first transcontinental motor road in North America, has carried a special significance for enthusiasts of prewar automobiles. This chapter discusses the efforts of the original Lincoln Highway Association to promote the road in the 1910s and 1920s as well as the activities of the revived group's efforts to preserve it starting in the early 1990s, culminating in the highway's centennial celebration, held in Kearney, Nebraska, in July 2013. This event in particular shows that the highway

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[11] John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
[12] Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

is celebrated as a dynamic entity and serves as the setting to recreate and re-perform an imagined past.

The second chapter, “Just Passing Through: Place Collectors/Collecting Place,” discusses certain acts of mobility as a form of collecting. The majority of scholarship on collecting focuses primarily on material objects and less on experience. This chapter examines how place is often treated as an entity that can be collected, becoming in the process a constitutive factor in the construction of identity similar to physical objects that are part of a collection. Place collecting remakes places and landscapes, at least for those who move through them in these ways, just as it shapes the identities of the individuals who “collect” places.

Some of these practices have a tendency to invert the distinction between abstract space and lived place formulated by Tuan and others, elevating the importance of ordinary places while reducing traditionally “important” tourist sites to little more than boxes on a checklist. These practices also reveal a tension between traveling through place quickly and being in place for a certain length of time. Finally, this chapter explores the role of certain digital and electronic technologies in enabling or facilitating practices of place collecting and the ways we encounter the physical environment.

The third chapter, “Presence and Possession: Documenting Ephemeral Movements,” discusses the importance of demonstrating our presence to others. Using graffiti as its main focus, this chapter shows how traces left by individuals serve as a public record of existing in a particular place and, to a lesser extent, time. However it is expressed and whatever the location, the underlying message to these public records is “I was here,” especially after the late 1960s when the current name-based form of graffiti started to become the most common form. Graffiti as unsanctioned writing (in this chapter defined as “writing out of place” that demonstrates our being in place) acquires an added dimension when it is affixed to a moving object that acts as a mobile declaration of human presence. Though commonly thought to originate with the New York subway system in the early 1970s, this way of marking place dates to the late nineteenth century. The proliferation of graffiti since this time is as much a way to reify one’s existence as it is an effort to reject advertising’s domination of public space.

This chapter also examines the role of photography as a way to document these traces. As inherently ephemeral visual records of existence, graffiti is always in danger of disappearing permanently, a fact Hungarian-born photographer Brassai recognized in his impulse to capture images of Parisian streets starting in the 1930s. A proliferation of documentation of graffiti starting in the late 1980s and early 1990s led graffiti writers to seek out different locations in which to leave their marks – remote places where few people would see the mark in real life but thousands more could see in magazines and books.

The fourth and final chapter, “From Pizza to Parolees: The Prevalence of Location Monitoring in Everyday Life,” traces the history of tracking objects across time and space while discussing some of the various military, commercial, scientific, and ludic applications of tracking technologies. In doing so, this chapter finds similarities between the tracking of mobile objects, the involuntary location monitoring of those required to wear a tracking device as part of a punitive sentence, and seemingly mundane practices like voluntarily disclosing one’s location on social media or tracing a dedicated route through the use of a fitness tracker.

Using materials housed in the Archives of the History of American Psychology at the University of Akron, chapter four explores in detail the history of the development and implementation of ankle-worn monitoring devices commonly prescribed to those subject to restraining orders or placed under house arrest. The devices, first envisioned in the 1960s but not used until 1984, became an increasingly common solution to the prison overcrowding that accompanied rising incarceration rates caused by the War on Drugs, despite concerns raised by the original developers about their potential for misuse. Using newer theoretical models of surveillance, this chapter shows how voluntary acts of location disclosure, paired with artistic and ludic experiments that play with geolocation, may in fact serve to normalize surveillance of the mobile human body. As location monitoring becomes more common and more precise, human bodies become little more than points of data or mobile pins on electronic maps, even as various playful practices seek to counteract this subjectivity.

What ultimately binds these practices and experiences together are acts of mobility that, for many people, profoundly impact our understanding of daily life. What follows in each of the four chapters is a discussion of how ordinary people, using commonplace technologies as they move in ordinary ways, create meaning out of the experience of being in place. These practices of place, which add up to much more than their constitutive elements of setting and movement, are attempts to make sense out of what it means to be mobile and what it means to exist.

Chapter 1: Navigating the Roadscape:

Performing the Past Along the Lincoln Highway

O public road, I say back I am not afraid to leave you, yet I love you, You express me better than I can express myself, You shall be more to me than my poem.

– Walt Whitman

All you need to know about American society can be gleaned from an anthropology of its driving behavior. That behavior tells you much more than you could ever learn from its political ideas. Drive ten thousand miles across America and you will know more about the country than all the institutes of sociology and political science put together.

– Jean Baudrillard

AMERICA(NS) ON THE MOVE

While the two passages above were written from perspectives 130 years and an ocean apart, one by a nineteenth century American poet[1] and the other by a twentieth century French poststructural theorist[2], each attempts to articulate the thought that there is something deeper to traveling along roads and highways than might ordinarily appear. The ability to traverse the North American continent is, as architectural historian Joe Kerr puts it, "deeply embedded in the fundamental American notion of freedom." To Kerr, the more than 42,000 miles of Interstate highway, which facilitates an estimated 500 billion miles of motor travel annually, is a site for numerous connections – both symbolic and actual – among disparate communities, locations, and cultures that help cohere the American nation state.[3] Each successive transportation paradigm – roads, canals, railroads, and highways – are physical manifestations of the human impact upon the natural world, worlds that are

[1] From Walt Whitman, "Song of the Open Road," present in all but the 1855 first edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

[2] Jean Baudrillard, *America,* trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1988), 54-55.

[3] Joe Kerr, "Uniting States: The American Highway System," in Andrew Cross, *Along Some American Highways* (London: Black Dog, 2003), 2. Kerr goes so far as to call the red and blue Interstate highway shields the most powerful signifier of the unity of the United States.

not separate but deeply interconnected. Indeed, the desire for mobility and expansion, frequently present in the individual and the larger collective, and brought about by public-private partnerships that enabled the construction of roads and other large transportation projects, has long been central to the American nation.[4]

What follows in this chapter has less to do with transportation infrastructure and mobility than it does with the *experience* of traveling certain routes in specific ways that demonstrate how roads are layered with multiple histories and become sites for meaning-making among certain communities of travelers. Transportation routes such as the Erie Canal and Lincoln Highway, though today traveled in different ways than in the past, demonstrate much about attitudes toward historic preservation. While the history of American roads and their development is well documented, this chapter first identifies transportation corridors as distinct places in themselves and then explores aspects of roads as they contribute to a sense of meaning and identity to travelers and serve as a site in which to reconstruct (or perform) an exclusive, idealized version of the past.

Commercial and expansionistic ambitions were the primary motivations for the construction of new transportation routes in the early nineteenth century, generally westward but also along the Atlantic coast.[5] Specifically, the earliest large construction and

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[4] Though a long-standing rift was assumed to exist between what was considered the natural world and the human world, numerous scholars have since cast significant doubt on this separation, if not worked to erase it altogether. One example is William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

[5] The idea of westward expansion is a result of an American origin story that begins with the English colonies and generally disregards Spanish colonization that moved northward in the Southwest nearly a century earlier, fur trappers and Jesuit missionaries coming from French Canada, and even Russian settlement of the Pacific Northwest in the early nineteenth century. Historically, narratives of westward expansion tended to ignore the native peoples already present in the "frontier" or treat the space as a tabula rasa upon which to reinvent oneself and ease sectional tensions. See Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985).

transportation projects in the United States were intended to ensure financial superiority for the principal East Coast ports by opening up inland markets for export. In the early part of the nineteenth century, a nascent industrialization prompted widespread construction of canals in the nation's Northeast.[6] The Erie Canal, completed in 1825, is perhaps the best known of the numerous canal projects completed in the first half of the nineteenth century. Historian Carol Sheriff identifies what she terms a "paradox of progress" that was brought about by the canal: one could purchase fresh Long Island oysters in Batavia, New York, as early as 1824, but the sudden influx of new settlement and population also disrupted the existing social order.[7] Extrapolating Sheriff's microcosm of the Erie Canal, one can regard large scale transportation projects in the years between the War of 1812 and the Civil War as indicative of profound social transformations during the antebellum era that included new geographic mobility, environmental change, expansion of markets, and an increased role of government in economic development. To the optimist, and indeed to much of the middle class, these changes might be interpreted as progress. To groups concerned with moral reform or maintaining existing social hierarchies, they might be perceived as declension. Still other groups were bypassed, excluded, or otherwise did not benefit from these changes.[8] In addition to altering the social structure of the then-frontier, the Erie

[6] See Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), especially chapter 1, "Visions of Progress." For a less critical narrative of progress, see Peter Bernstein, *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation* (New York: Norton, 2005). The period of canal building in the United States followed by about two decades an explosion of waterway construction and land speculation in Britain called "canal mania."
[7] The story about the availability of fresh oysters in Batavia is how Sheriff begins her book. The Faustian bargain framework that Sheriff alludes to with her term "paradox of progress" also underlies Marshall Berman's *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).
[8] The list of these transformations appears in Sheriff, 5. For an excellent description of how the social order changed in Rochester during the years of Erie Canal construction and completion, see Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).

Canal catapulted New York City past Philadelphia as the principal center for shipping and commerce within a decade of the canal's completion.

In 1826, the year after the completion of the Erie Canal, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to protect the economic interests of Philadelphia businessmen, funded the construction of the Main Line of Public Works, a system of canals (and later railroads) that connected the Susquehanna River with Lake Erie and the Ohio River. Travel time between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, previously a 23-day journey, was reduced to four days once the system was completed in 1834.[9] Philadelphia was already connected to New York by the Delaware and Raritan Canal, also completed in 1834, and to Baltimore by the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, whose fourteen miles eliminated nearly 300 miles of water travel between the nation's second and third largest cities.[10]

Numerous other canals were built in the first half of the nineteenth century. The 22-mile Dismal Swamp Canal was opened in 1805 after twelve years of slave labor construction.[11] Connecting Elizabeth City and Norfolk, the canal provided an alternative to a poor plank road and rough Atlantic waters. The earliest canal proposal in North America was for the Cape Cod Canal, first suggested by Miles Standish of Plymouth Colony as early as 1623. Though the idea was proposed to the General Court of Massachusetts in 1697 and half a dozen surveys were conducted between 1776 and 1860,

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[9] See Albert Churella, *The Pennsylvania Railroad, Volume 1: Building an Empire 1846-1917* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), and William Shank, *The Amazing Pennsylvania Canals, 150th Anniversary Edition* (York PA: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1986).

[10] The idea was first proposed by Augustine Herman, a Bohemian merchant and cartographer working for the Dutch to produce an accurate map of the Chesapeake Bay and what would later be called the Delmarva Peninsula. Though businessmen in Philadelphia repeatedly proposed construction in the later part of the eighteenth century, work did not begin until 1822. The canal was completed in 1829.

[11] Thomas Parramore, *Norfolk: The First Four Centuries* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press 2000), 147.

the cost of the project was too prohibitive and construction did not begin until 1909, well after the heyday of canals in the United States.

Beyond the obvious economic impact of their construction, canals, particularly the Erie Canal, ushered in a new wave of tourism for those who could afford it. With a reduction in the time and cost necessary to traverse great distances, more and more people were able to participate in the voluntary mobility of tourism. As Sheriff points out, by 1826 tourists from Europe and the eastern United States began "flooding the region" en route to Niagara Falls, arguably the nation's first tourist destination.[12] While the magnitude of Niagara Falls was regarded as sublime, the Erie Canal that tourists used to reach the Falls became a destination in itself, an example of what Perry Miller calls the "technological sublime."[13] As an example of engineering that was as much a spectacle as a mode of transportation, the Erie Canal was not just a means to reach a destination but a place in itself.

The era of canal building in the United States ended upon the advent of railroad construction. Railroads were not as efficient as waterborne shipping based on tonnage transported per mile, but they offered numerous advantages over canals. They could be

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[12] Sheriff, 58. For more about early tourism to Niagara Falls, see John Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), chapter 1, "'Doing' Niagara Falls in the Nineteenth Century."

[13] The term "technological sublime," which originated with Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), 65, was also used by Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), and later revisited in John Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976) and David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1996). Sheriff titles her book *The Artificial River*, echoing similar phrases used to describe the Erie Canal as human improvement upon (or even perfection of) the natural environment. This is similar to David Nye's use of the phrase "Second Creation" in *America as Second Creation: Technology and Narratives of New Beginnings* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2003). An early exploration of nineteenth-century American cultural tensions surrounding the relationship between technology and nature can be found in Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*.

built over greater distances and steeper terrain than canals, and their construction and maintenance was far less expensive and labor intensive. Railroads could also be operated year-round, unlike canals which could freeze solid in winter months, rendering transportation impossible. Though the two transportation systems coexisted for much of the nineteenth century, by the early 1840s railroad mileage had exceeded the combined distance of all canals in the United States.[14]

The very earliest railroads in the United States were built along inclines, thus relying on gravity, and used in mines and excavation projects. In October 1826, operations began on the Granite Railway, which was built to haul granite from Quincy, Massachusetts, to a dock on the Neponset River in Milton, a distance of three miles.[15] The Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, which opened in August 1831 and ran sixteen miles between Albany and Schenectady, was the first railroad designed from its outset to be powered by a steam engine locomotive. The railroad was built as an alternative to a notoriously congested section of the Erie Canal, shortening the fifteen-mile trip from an entire day to less than an hour. Writing in his journal about the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, one traveler remarked, "Among the astonishing inventions of man, surely that of the locomotive steam engine hath no secondary rank. By this matchless exercise of skill, we fly with a smooth and even course along once impassable barriers, the valleys are filled, the mountains laid low, and distance seems annihilated."[16]

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[14] For a more detailed explanation of competing transportation systems, see Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Claude Comtois, and Brian Slack, *The Geography of Transport Systems* (London: Routledge, 2006), 76.

[15] A thorough account of the development of the Granite Railway was published for its centennial in 1926 by the Walton Advertising & Printing Company of Boston and digitized by the Thomas Crane Public Library of Quincy, MA. Available at http://thomascranelibrary.org/legacy/railway/railway.htm, accessed July 27, 2015.

[16] Louise Fogle, "Journal of Ebenezer Mattoon Chamberlain," *Indiana Magazine of History* XV, no. 3 (September 1919), 241.

The first passenger railroad in the United States followed the Patapsco River from Baltimore, Maryland, to Ellicott City (then called Ellicott's Mills), a distance of thirteen miles. Charles Carroll, at age ninety the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, participated in the groundbreaking ceremony on July 4, 1828, suggesting an important connection between transportation and patriotism. The inaugural trip took place on May 22, 1830, with passenger cars pulled by horses walking alongside the tracks. New York businessman and philanthropist Peter Cooper, driven in part by a desire to see the fledgling railroad increase the value of his Baltimore real estate holdings, designed "Tom Thumb," the first American-built steam locomotive, in 1830. The 1.4 horsepower engine famously lost a race with a horse-drawn carriage on August 28, 1830, though it performed well enough to signal a shift from horse power to steam power.[17] Baltimore had been a principal port in the early nineteenth century because of its relative proximity to many inland markets but had seen its importance diminish after the completion of the Erie Canal shifted focus to New York City. Suggesting its ambition, the company called itself the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, a destination it would not reach until 1853.

The transportation projects that accompanied the advent of steam power not only altered physical landscapes; they fundamentally altered social worlds as well. The Erie Canal prompted the meteoric growth of cities such as Utica, Syracuse, and Rochester. Steamboats ushered in a dramatic increase in the populations of cities along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers in the early half of the nineteenth century. The Transcontinental Railroad, completed in 1869, reduced the overland travel time between New York and San Francisco

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[17] John Stover, *History of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 35-36. Another steam locomotive was successfully run in Charleston on the South Carolina Railroad in November, 1830.

from six months to one week. Its completion was praised as a technology that bound the nation together, though the influx of travelers and settlers brought west by the railroad was disastrous for native people who relied on buffalo for survival. In much of the country, towns and cities grew along the expanding network of railroads, connected by a unique landscape geographer John Stilgoe calls the "Metropolitan Corridor."[18] Finally, leisure travel became more affordable to the growing middle classes and as a result destinations of greater and greater distances became more easily accessible, at least for those who could afford to take the journey.

Despite reliance on a technology that championed speed and efficiency, many railroad companies emphasized the scenery of the landscapes their routes traversed. Especially during the late nineteenth century, many pamphlets and brochures touted the benefits of visiting places like Yellowstone, the Rockies, and other places that much of the American population had only seen in paintings, lithographs, and photographs. Though many of the images were exaggerated, they still contributed to a belief that the American landscape was unspoiled, superior to the rest of the world, and restorative to urban-dwelling Easterners.[19]

While railroad companies advertised their services to tourists seeking to visit these landscapes, critics had much to say about how this mode of transportation affected the tourist's relationship to the spaces they passed through. One common criticism was that

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[18] John Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). In the preface, Stilgoe identifies this particular type of geography as one not adequately described by the traditional terms urban, suburban, rural, cityscape, or landscape.

[19] As Barbara Novak demonstrates in *Nature and Culture: American Landscape Painting 1825-1875* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), landscape artists in the mid-nineteenth century were both influenced by and helped perpetuate this worldview. Railroad brochures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries convey similar attitudes about the American landscape. See Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian, 2001).

the railroad polluted the previously bucolic (and therefore potentially attractive) landscape with noise, soot, and masses of people.[20] As one French critic wrote, railways "only serve the points of departure, the way stations, and the terminals, which are mostly at great distances from each other...they are of no use whatsoever for the intervening space, which they traverse with disdain and provide only with a useless spectacle."[21] Despite tensions between this technology and the land it crossed (and made more accessible), rail travel was the dominant transportation paradigm for the rest of the nineteenth century, and railroad mileage in the United States increased from only a few miles in the early 1830s to more than 250,000 by World War I. Like the Erie Canal in the mid-nineteenth century and highways in the twentieth, railroads facilitated tourism while also becoming distinct places in themselves, creating new types of landscapes in the process.

LANDSCAPE AND ROADSCAPE

The word *landscape* in Old English originally referred to a collection or system of human-defined spaces. By the seventeenth century, it would be adapted into Dutch as *landschap*, which took on an aesthetic dimension to describe views or panoramas. A century later, "landscape" was reintroduced into the English language to describe paintings of natural views as well as constructed gardens and architecture. While "landscape" would most commonly come to mean human-influenced places considered particularly scenic, scholars and geographers in the twentieth century began using the term to describe places

[20] As Leo Marx demonstrates in chapter IV of *Machine in the Garden*, "The Machine," railroads simultaneously symbolized both technological progress and the precariousness of the rural ideal that many believed was rapidly disappearing.

[21] Charles Dunoyer quoted in Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 45. Schivelbusch also notes that locomotives were commonly compared to projectiles such as bullets, suggesting a certain amount of danger.

regardless of their aesthetic qualities, which could be variously interpreted, and acknowledged that landscapes often profoundly shaped human experience and identity.[22] The term is often subject to overlapping but not necessarily contradictory definitions: landscape could be the visible result of human labor; a manifestation of capitalist power; a textual, symbolic, and semiotic thing to be read and interpreted; and "a composition of man-made or man-modified spaces to serve as infrastructure or background for our collective existence."[23] For the purposes of this chapter, I follow a synthesis of these definitions that acknowledge landscape as both a reflection and shaper of cultural values and norms, and artificial – influenced if not completely constructed by humans – and fluid – subject to physical, symbolic, and interpretational changes.[24]

Geographer J. B. Jackson was among the first to recognize the importance of what he called "vernacular landscapes." Though he uses this term to describe places as far back as the rise of modern centralized state control in the medieval era, in the contemporary era the vernacular landscape includes places like the parking lot, the highway, the shopping center, and other seemingly banal locations. In various essays, Jackson defines their

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[22] Chris Wilson and Paul Groth, eds., *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 2-3.

[23] These definitions are from Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); D. W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 8.

[24] In an essay called "Concluding with Landscapes," Jackson writes, "Landscape is not scenery, it is not a political unit, it is really no more than a collection, a system of man-made spaces on the surface of the earth. Whatever its shape or size it is never simply a natural space, a feature of the natural environment; it is always artificial, always synthetic, always subject to sudden or unpredictable change." In Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, 156.

characteristics as mobility, adaptability, preference for the transitory and the ephemeral, loosely structured, fluid, and expansive.[25]

Borrowing from the term landscape, "roadscape" describes a specific type of vernacular landscape that includes not just the scenery along roads and highways, but the routes themselves as a distinct type of landscape.[26] Though Jackson does not actually use the term *roadscape*, he hints that the vernacular landscape of the roadway deserves its own category, writing, "Roads no longer merely lead to places; they are places. And as always they serve two important roles: as promoters of growth and dispersion, and as magnets around which new kinds of development can cluster. In a modern landscape, no other space has been so versatile."[27] While not identifying the word's origin, material culture historian Thomas Schlereth uses the term *roadscape* to describe the Indiana portion of U.S. Highway 40 as a site for a methodology he calls "above-ground archaeology."[28]

While roads have long been embedded in American mythology, few specific highways evoke strong emotional or nostalgic reactions. In *Highway 61 Revisited*, Bob Dylan connected himself to the storied Blues Highway, the migration route for many blues musicians traveling from New Orleans and Memphis toward Chicago (though generally not as far north as Dylan's Minnesota, where the highway ends), the same highway upon which a young Robert Johnson supposedly traded his soul to play guitar. The most famous

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[25] The first four characteristics are from "Concluding With Landscapes" that appears in *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, 154. The other three are from his essay "Truck City" in J. B. Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 185.

[26] To Jackson, landscape is, like language, "the field of perpetual conflict and compromise between what is established by authority and what the vernacular insists upon preferring." In *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, 148.

[27] Jackson, quoted in *Andrew Cross, Along Some American Highways* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2003), 12.

[28] Thomas Schlereth, *US 40: A Roadscape of the American Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1985).

American highway is arguably Route 66, part of which was memorialized in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* as "The Mother Road," before being the subject of an early rock-n-roll song (a highway on which to get one's kicks), and then a television program featuring blue-collar Buz and comparatively privileged Tod with his inherited Corvette (the show helped double Corvette sales its first season), and finally emblazoned upon all manner of shirts, decals, stickers, and other ephemera. The route shield has become a logo, a brand, and "Route 66," though it has ceased to be an officially designated as such in the Federal Highway numbering system, is now a metonym for historic road culture.[29]

At least part of the mythology about roads comes from their treatment in literature as sites for a certain kind of privileged form of mobility, especially in the postwar decades. Perhaps the most famous example is Kerouac's semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional *On the Road*, where the author, writing in the guise of Sal Paradise, speeds across the country numerous times as both passenger and hitchhiker, his quest for adventure never quite restrained by the responsibilities of adult life. Near the end of his life, John Steinbeck drove 10,000 miles around the United States with his poodle Charley in a camper truck appropriately named *Rocinante* after Don Quixote's horse. Perhaps seeking to portray something different from Kerouac's seedy version of America, *Travels With Charley: In Search of America* consists of Steinbeck's musings about the places he visits and people he talks to throughout the country.[30]

[29] Because Route 66 has already been the subject of much writing, it is not discussed at length here. Two early texts written about the highway are Quinta Scott and Susan Croce Kelly, *Route 66: The Highway and Its People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988) and Michael Wallis, *Route 66: The Mother Road* (New York: St Martin's, 1990).

[30] It should be noted that the accuracy of *Travels With Charley* began to be challenged in early 2011, starting with Charles McGrath, "A Reality Check for Steinbeck and Charley," *New York Times*, April 3, 2011, and Bill Steigerwald, "Sorry, Charley: Was John Steinbeck's Travels With Charley a Fraud?" *Reason.com*, April 4, 2011. Reason.com/archives/2011/04/04/sorry-charley. Also see Bill Steigerwald, *Dogging Steinbeck: Discovering America and Exposing the Truth About 'Travels With Charley'*

Following Steinbeck's more-or-less journalistic style is William Least Heat-Moon, whose *Blue Highways* consists of similar encounters with ordinary people. Being part Osage, Heat-Moon's writing in *Blue Highways* contains a somewhat different perspective from Steinbeck that occasionally borders on metaphysical – Heat-Moon names his vehicle Ghost Dancing, for example. In the introduction to *Blue Highways*, Heat-Moon explains that on older highway maps (he was writing this in the 1970s), main routes were red and the secondary roads blue (from which the book takes its name). These highways, he says, echo the color of the sky during liminal times of day, "just before dawn and a little after dusk – times neither day nor night," and it is during these times "when the pull of the highway is strongest, when the open road is a beckoning, a strangeness, a place where a man can lose himself."[31] To Heat-Moon, the small local roads are places for driving instead of being driven, suggesting a completely different purpose than speed or efficiency.[32] Heat-Moon's personal connection to the roadscape is not unlike that of Robert Pirsig, writing a few years earlier, whose philosophical approach in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* treats the road as a backdrop for discussions about epistemology and ethics.[33] The works of these authors demonstrate that the Open Road was by the 1970s a mythologized place, full of opportunity for adventure and self-discovery, at least among those with the necessary social status and economic means.

(Pittsburgh: CreateSpace, 2012). Steinbeck's biographer Jay Parini acknowledges the potential for alteration and embellishment in the book's fiftieth anniversary edition, published the year after high-profile criticisms of the book's accuracy came to light.

31 William Least Heat-Moon, *Blue Highways: A Journey Into America* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1982), 1.

32 Heat-Moon, 67.

33 See Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values* (New York: Willliam Morrow, 1974), a work Heat-Moon was almost certainly familiar with.

FROM NATIONAL ROAD TO US 40

To examine roads as distinct places, one must go back to the National Road, the first federally funded improved road in the United States. The National Road begins with John, Andrew, and Joseph Ellicott, who built a nine-mile road to transport goods from their flour mill to the port at Baltimore in the 1780s. The Baltimore bankers who financed the road's construction envisioned a road extending to the Cumberland Valley 150 miles to the west, and upon completion the route west of Hagerstown became known as the Bank Road. In 1806, Albert Gallatin, Treasury Secretary under President Jefferson, created a plan for a federally funded national road to the Ohio River at Wheeling. Construction began in 1811 and the road was opened seven years later. Congress funded construction of the National Road to Vandalia, Illinois, through 1839 after deciding not to extend it to St Louis and maintenance of the road was turned over to the individual states it passed through.

Most of the National Road east of the Mississippi River eventually became US Route 40, the subject of a book of photographs and essays written by geographer George Rippey Stewart in the early 1950s. To Stewart, Route 40 (then connecting San Francisco and Atlantic City) is more than a route or highway, but a singular complex material *thing*, "developing or deteriorating, always changing" that cannot be weighed or defined clearly, "though it is highly interesting, and can be talked about indefinitely."[34] It is merely the current named route between places that already existed during previous historic modes of transportation. Stewart suggests the highway is demonstrative of the variety of landscapes found across the continent:

[34] George Rippey Stewart, *U.S. 40: Cross Section of the United States of America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), 4. The highway designation for route 40 currently ends in Heber City, Utah, since the decommission of its western portion after the completion of Interstate 80 in the 1970s.

> U.S. 40 must be even more than a highway *and* a route…It must be not only what can be seen, but also what can be felt and heard and smelled. We must concern ourselves with the land that lies beside it and the clouds that float above it and the streams that flow beneath its bridges. We must remember the people who pass along it, and those others who passed that way in the former years. We can forget neither the ancient trees that shadow it, nor the roadside weeds that grow upon its shoulders. We must not reject the wires that parallel it, or the billboards that flaunt themselves along its margins. We must accept the slums of 'Truck Route' as well as the skyscrapers of 'City Route,' and the fine churches and houses of 'Alternate Route.' We must not avert our eyes even from the effluvia of the highway itself—the broken tires, and rusting beer cans, and smashed jack-rabbits. Only by considering it all, as we drive from the east or from the west, shall we come to know in cross section, the United States of America.[35]

In explaining his decision to focus on U.S. 40 as opposed to the other seven transcontinental highways in the Federal Highway System at the time, Stewart claims the highway is "the richest historically of any of the transcontinentals, thus best demonstrating the cross section in time" while also "displaying to the best advantage the cross section in space," running across the country roughly along the center.[36] Similar to Jackson's emphasis on vernacular landscapes, Stewart expresses a preference for "the typical as much as in the outstanding…sometimes even avoid[ing] the picturesque."[37] His book divides Route 40 into 92 short sections, each with an accompanying photograph and a page or two consisting of the history of a local landmark, earlier versions of trails along the same route, statistics relating to anything from geology to traffic counts, and Stewart's platitudes about landscapes.

[35] Stewart, 5. Stewart then describes the variety of landscapes and climates traversed by the highway as well as the route's temporal dimension, mentioning that the route followed no fewer than thirteen prior paths, trails, wagon roads, and auto trails.
[36] Stewart, 8.
[37] Stewart, 34.

In 1979 and 1980, Thomas and Geraldine Vale retraced Stewart's journey along Route 40, carefully photographing the exact same shots that appeared in Stewart's book thirty years earlier in order to "represent dramatically, and reflect upon, the changing landscape of America," inviting the reader to examine these changes (and similarities) closely.[38] Some images look essentially the same, particularly in the Mountain West, but most of the others show the addition or removal of buildings and even the growth of individual trees. By the time the Vales made their journey in the footsteps (or tire treads) of Stewart, U.S. 40 had largely been functionally replaced by Interstates 70 and 80 and the importance of the older route, at least for long distance travel, had diminished.

Different authors have used a variety of metaphors to describe Highway 40 and its antecedents (and conceivably by extension, other old roads). First, Stewart relied on a description of the highway as a "cross section" of the United States. Thirty years later, the Vales continued in his spirit of describing the specific highway as a distinct place, personifying the "working road" as having the "job" of spanning the continent.[39] Writing about just the Indiana portion of the highway in the mid-1980s, Schlereth considered the road a physical artifact, a "mammoth outdoor museum of American history," and an opportunity for cultural research.[40] In an essay that appears in Clarence Carvell's book on the National Road, photographer Frank Van Riper compares the old National Road to an

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[38] Thomas Vale and Geraldine Vale, *U.S. 40 Today: Thirty Years of Landscape Change in America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), i. The Vales even go so far as to claim they traveled vicariously *with* Stewart on page 183.
[39] Vale and Vale, 181.
[40] Schlereth, vii.

armature – “the wire skeleton on which a beautiful clay sculpture is built,” suggesting the road is a framework for everything built up around it over the past two centuries.[41]

FROM AUTO TRAIL TO SUPERHIGHWAY

Pressure to improve American roads came not from automobile owners in the early twentieth century but from the League of American Wheelmen, an organization of bicycle owners, in the late nineteenth. Their lobbying efforts, as well as that of the American Automobile Association (AAA), combined with the movement to expand Rural Free Delivery of U.S. mail, were major factors in the construction of hard-surfaced roads, what geographer J. Todd Snow calls “The New Road.”[42] The development of these types of roads was ultimately the result of a rapidly increasing number of automobiles in the first decade of the twentieth century. Whereas older roads and trails primarily served military or economic ends, the “New Road” was intended to facilitate new transportation purposes. For motorists these included private regional travel, auto tourism, and the movement of freight and farm good to railheads, and for cyclists, exercise and recreation.

Before the federal system of highways was established in the 1920s (of which US 40 and the famed Route 66 were part), there was an earlier system of American highways called auto trails. Mostly regional, these roads were of varying quality and designation but were also the most sophisticated interstate roads available at the time. Many were funded by states or even counties, and they were concentrated mostly on the east coast and in the Midwest. The Office of Public Roads, created by the Agriculture Appropriations Act of

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[41] Clarence Carvell, *The National Road: A Photographic Journey* (Baltimore: American Literary Press, 2007), ii. Carvell’s black and white photographs mostly depict bridges and buildings and are accompanied by minimal commentary. Notably, the back cover calls the National Road “America’s most historic byway.”

[42] J. Todd Snow, “’The New Road’ in the United States: Spatial and Behavioral,” *Landscape* XVII, no. 1 (Autumn, 1967): 13-16. See also Schlereth, 6-8.

1905, published a map in 1912 that identified twelve proposed transcontinental routes, following the suggestions of road boosters and auto clubs.[43]

The system of regional auto trails came about as various organizations sought to connect distant destinations with a uniform route. Stewart rather cynically describes the development of auto trail organizations that followed in the wake of the success of the first of these groups, the Lincoln Highway Association, due to the less-than-altruistic efforts of many road promoters. Stewart claims all one needed to do was trace a route on a primitive road map between two places, give the route an important-sounding name, and sketch an official-looking road marker. The next step was to drive the chosen route, persuading local Chambers of Commerce and individual merchants to pay dues to a barely-existent organization, and if they refused, threaten to reroute the highway through a different town. Apparently this technique was successful, and so many towns were anxious to be on the new route, "you merely made a split, routed it both ways, and collected double."[44] Owners of garages, hotels, and restaurants often became auto trail organization representatives and arranged to paint route markings on telephone poles, leaving the actual organization with few responsibilities other than to collect annual dues. The largest and best-functioning of these organizations, such as those responsible for the Lincoln Highway, Dixie Highway, and Old Spanish Trail, did actual construction and maintenance on their roads but there were enough unscrupulous auto trail promoters to damage the movement's reputation as a whole.

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[43] For details about the early lobbying groups and the role of government agencies in the Good Roads Movement, see William Kaszynski, *The American Highway: The History and Culture of Roads in the United States* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2000), 30-38.
[44] Stewart, 12.

More than 250 distinct auto trails were in existence by the mid-1920s, creating a cacophony of routes and markings that were difficult to navigate at best. According to Stewart, telephone poles were sometimes painted from top to bottom in route markings, routes such as the Dixie Highway had two or even three separate branches across multiple states, and one stretch of road (he does not specify where) carried eleven different routes. In 1924 the Secretary of Agriculture, working under the Bureau of Public Roads, appointed a Joint Board on Interstate Highways. The board presented their report at the following year's meeting of the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO), recommending the abandonment of the haphazard system of privately funded and marked auto trails in favor of a national system of highways with standardized numbering. Within a few years the auto trail associations were essentially extinct.[45]

In 1926, the federal government created a national set of guidelines for interstate highways, standardizing route numbering, signage, and construction details for the new Federal Highway System, which would be the primary network of federally funded roads for the next three decades. The need for a system of national highways was made more urgent by the realization that America's existing highways could not accommodate large-scale military transportation.[46] Though a system of roads totaling more than 75,000 miles was proposed, the final mileage measured just under 40,000 when completed in the late 1930s. In 1941, the Public Road Administration issued a report called "Highways of National Defense," which identified 3,300 miles of roads to be upgraded on or near military

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[45] Stewart, 13-14.

[46] See Pete Davies, *American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002). Among those present for the Army's 1919 transcontinental truck convoy was a young Dwight Eisenhower, who would later be a key proponent of the Interstate Highway System.

bases. Later that year, President Roosevelt signed the Defense Highway Act, authorizing $150 million to build roads and another $50 million to upgrade existing roads deemed vital to the nation's defense. In 1944 the Bureau of Public Roads released a report that proposed a new system of limited-access interstate highways that would replace the current Federal Highway System, which had become inadequate to handle traffic volumes within and near urban centers. After several states opened privately-operated or state-owned turnpikes in the early 1950s, President Eisenhower signed the Interstate Highway Act in 1955.[47]

The Interstate Highway System, the largest construction project in human history, has been subject to numerous criticisms. Separating industrial sites from suburban enclaves, their construction displaced more than a million people in the few decades after the passage of the Interstate Highway Act in 1956, many of whom have been racial and ethnic minorities living in poverty. Occasionally employing the metaphor of a surgical knife cutting off parts of the city deemed undesirable, Ginger Strand points out how the Interstate Highway System even facilitated the undetected movement of serial killers.[48]

Aesthetically, the Interstate Highway System is commonly criticized for championing efficiency over scenery, paired with the tacit belief that earlier road systems were better synthesized with the landscapes they traversed and offered motorists the opportunity to view a greater diversity of scenery and regional culture. Novelist Larry McMurtry, who is otherwise generally supportive of Interstate highways in his book

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[47] States with their own turnpikes by this time include Oklahoma, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. Most were eventually absorbed into the Interstate Highway System. The Interstate Highway System was considered complete with the opening of I-70 through Glenwood Canyon in Colorado in 1992, thirty-five years after the System's first concrete was laid in eastern Kansas.

[48] Ginger Strand, *Killer on the Road: Violence and the American Interstate* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), especially chapter 3, "The Cruelest Blow."

Roads: Driving America's Great Highways, nevertheless writes, "The development of credit-card gas pumps, microwaves, and express motels had eliminated the necessity for human contact along the interstates. It is now possible to drive coast to coast without speaking to a human being at all: you just slide your card, pump your gas, buy a couple of Hershey bars, perhaps heat up a burrito, and put the pedal back to the metal."[49] Journalist Charles Kuralt, known for his many dispatches from the road, said, "Thanks to the Interstate, it is now possible to travel from coast to coast without seeing anything. From the Interstate, America is all steel guardrails and plastic signs, and every place looks and feels and sounds and smells like every other place."[50] Steinbeck, during the early years of Interstate construction, wrote, "These great roads are wonderful for moving goods but not for inspection of a countryside…No roadside stands selling squash juice, no antique stores, no farm products or factory outlets. When we get these thruways across the whole country…it will be possible to drive from New York to California without seeing a single thing."[51] William Least Heat-Moon, writing in *Blue Highways* around the time the Interstate Highway System was nearing its completion, said bluntly, "Life doesn't happen along the Interstates. It's against the law."[52] For these particular authors, and indeed most

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[49] Larry McMurtry, *Roads: Driving America's Great Highways* (New York: Touchstone, 2000), 12. The vast majority of *Roads* is comprised of McMurtry's experiences driving Interstate, rather than federal or state, highways. McMurtry's criticism is preceded by George Rippey Stewart, who described a "dominating highway" where drivers are "more conscious of the highway than of the country through which you are passing…You see the highway itself, the traffic upon it, and the life that has grown up along it and is dependent upon it—all the world of service-stations and garages and restaurants and motor-courts." From Stewart's *U.S. 40: Cross Section of the United States of America,* 22.

[50] Charles Kuralt, *On the Road With Charles Kuralt* (New York: Fawcett, 1995), 26.

[51] John Steinbeck, *Travels With Charley: In Search of America* (New York: Viking Press, 1962), 89-90.

[52] Heat-Moon, *Blue Highways*, 9. Heat-Moon's journey, taken shortly after the Bicentennial, roughly coincided with an increased prevalence of trucking in popular culture. Long distance trucking had been growing steadily while the railroad industry had been experiencing a long decline since the late 1940s. The mid-1970s saw the CB radio craze and a rapid growth in a subgenre of country music concerned with the mythic figure of the trucker as modern-day cowboy, perhaps most evident in C.W. McCall's song "Convoy," which was awarded a gold record in 1976. In addition, "trucksploitation" films such as *Citizens*

travelers on the Interstates (those driving the roads in order to get somewhere quickly), the superhighways are unexceptional, less scenic than secondary roads, and what Marc Auge would call "non-places" – locales that we pass through on our way to somewhere else – symptoms of an all-encompassing supermodernity.[53]

THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

Before the creation of the Interstate Highway System and even before the network of Federal Highways that was standardized in 1926, there were several organizations devoted to the construction of long-distance auto trails. The most successful of the auto trail groups came about largely due to the efforts of Carl Fisher, founder of the automobile headlight company Prest-o-Lite, who would be instrumental in the creation of two major long distance roads, the Lincoln Highway and Dixie Highway. In late 1912, Fisher arranged a dinner party for industry leaders in Indianapolis to unveil his idea of the Coast-to-Coast Rock Highway. These wealthy industrialists, who included the heads of Firestone Tire, Packard Motor Company, and Lehigh Portland Cement Company, agreed to fund early construction and to promote long distance automobile travel and the importance of good roads in parts of the country that did not yet have them. In the words of the original proclamation, the purpose of the newly-formed group would be "to immediately promote and procure the establishment of a continuous improved highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, open to lawful traffic of all description, without toll charges and to be of concrete

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Band, *Deadhead Miles*, *Flatbed Annie & Sweetiepie: Lady Truckers*, and *Smokey and the Bandit* capitalized on the trend.

53 Marc Auge, *Non-Places: An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity,* trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 1995). Several texts discussing this type of highway (and the landscapes they create) has come from Britain. See Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital: A Walk Around the M25* (London: Granta Books, 2002), and Peter Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-historical Geography of England's M1 Motorway* (Blackwell: Oxford University Press, 2007). For a British perspective on American Interstate Highway landscapes, see Andrew Cross, *Along Some American Highways* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2003).

whenever practicable" and as a symbolic road that would bind the nation together, name the highway after President Lincoln.[54] The need for concrete roads was especially acute in the Plains, where roads would often deteriorate to knee-high mud in the spring when the accumulated snowfall melted. Even as late as the mid-1920s, road guides warned, "When it rains in Iowa or Nebraska, the tourist should stop if he wishes to save his car, his time, his tires and his temper."[55]

Fisher's group, the Lincoln Highway Association (LHA), began building one-mile stretches of modern concrete highway to demonstrate the superiority of the smooth hard surface over regional mud and gravel roads and to drum up support and enthusiasm from local motorists and fundraising boosters to continue road construction. The idea was these so-called "seedling miles" would eventually be connected, creating a truly uniform transcontinental highway. Much like the routes of railroads in the nineteenth century (and the Interstate Highways of the twentieth), the route of the highway could mean economic boom to the towns it connected or detriment to those it bypassed. By the early 1920s the Lincoln Highway was one of several transcontinental motor routes, a list including the Old Spanish Trail, Midland Trail, Victory Highway, and Pikes Peak to Ocean Highway. In the minds of the Association, the Lincoln Highway would serve as an "object lesson road" that demonstrated the feasibility of large-scale national highway construction.

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[54] Lincoln Highway Association, *A Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, fifth edition* [facsimile reprint of 1924 publication] (Tucson: Patrice Press, 1993), 91. It is worth noting that between 1907 and 1912, production of motor vehicles in the United States increased from 44,000 to 378,000, an increase of more than 850 percent (1924 *Road Guide*, 133). According to Kaszynski, automobile ownership grew from 1.3 million in 1913, the first year of the Lincoln Highway, to nearly 10 million by 1920 (52).

[55] 1924 *Road Guide*, 339. The members of the Lincoln Highway Association, many of whom lived in or near Detroit, had the opportunity to see firsthand the benefit of concrete roads over dirt. In 1909, the Wayne County Road Commission improved a section of Woodward Avenue in Detroit to be the first mile of concrete road in the United States. From Kaszynski, 32.

The early system of auto trails was characterized by inconsistent signage and state funding. Landowners or local highway boosters would often paint arrows on existing landmarks such as telephone poles or rock outcroppings to mark the way. The Lincoln Highway, largely due to a well-funded backing organization, had the advantage of uniform signage in the form of small concrete markers emblazoned with Lincoln's head, and red, white, and blue signs with a large "L" painted in the middle.[56] Still, traveling these minimally marked roads often required the use of a guidebook that included turn-by-turn directions, local city maps, and descriptions of the services available in each town such as lodging, banks, gasoline, and telephones.

The LHA published the first of five editions of the *Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway* in 1915. Because motorists needed to know in advance which cities might offer essential services such as gasoline, hotels, mechanics, and telephones, its creation was "made imperative by a demand, both insistent and increasing, for certain detailed information," and the book is punctuated with advertisements for manufacturers of automobiles and components, dealers, garages, and hotels.[57] The *Road Guide* is organized from east to west, listing accommodations and available services in each town the Lincoln Highway traversed as well as regional road conditions that motorists could expect to encounter. Some of the listings include brief commentary and other additional

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[56] Before the adoption of concrete markers, the tricolor Lincoln Highway image was painted on the nearest available boulder, fence post, or telephone pole. More than 8,000 telephone poles were painted with the Lincoln Highway insignia in 1916 alone, though road crews stopped at the Nebraska-Wyoming state line. Between 1916 and 1920, the Lincoln Highway Association, with the assistance of the California State Automobile Association and the Automobile Club of Southern California (precursors to today's AAA), placed more than 3,000 permanent markers between Omaha and New York City (1924 *Road Guide*, 85-86).

[57] 1915 *Road Guide*, 5. The information in the Road Guide was a collaborative effort between the Association and automobile enthusiasts: "In its compilation the Association has been aided by hundreds of those whose interest in the Highway might almost be considered an obsession."

details such as historical significance and number of automobiles registered in that city, and all include the distance in miles from each town to both New York and San Francisco. Near the end, the guide offers advice on shipping automobiles back to the east coast via railroad, indicating that the majority of motorists to drive the Lincoln Highway in the 1910s only did so in one direction, likely because traveling the entire route could easily take an entire month.

An early section in the 1915 *Road Guide* hints at what an extraordinary undertaking it was to drive across the country in the second decade of the twentieth century. In "Hints to Transcontinental Tourists," LHA Chief Engineer F. H. Trego suggests the journey would take nineteen days if driving for ten hours per day, making an approximate speed of eighteen miles per hour. Four passengers could complete the trip for around $300 if they camped along the way and cooked their own meals. Trego then lists seventeen things to avoid (don't wait until the gasoline is almost gone before filling up, don't allow the water-can to be other than full of fresh water, don't forget "camphor ice" – lip balm, don't ford water without wading through it first, don't drink alkali water, etc.) and numerous suggestions for things like getting out of a mud hole, preventing "sore hip" when sleeping on the ground, and building a fire. His recommendations for equipment (divided into four categories – car, camp, personal, and provisions) include numerous tools, cooking utensils and food containers, clothing and hygiene items, and dry goods. Trego especially stresses the importance of having these items west of Omaha, where the road was not as well-maintained and the distances between towns were greater.[58]

[58] 1915 *Road Guide*, 13.

The 1915 first edition of the *Road Guide* contained 158 pages. By 1924, the fifth edition had ballooned to 536 pages and included photographs and detailed local maps of the route. This edition of the guide tends toward self-congratulation, discussing in the introduction how advanced the highway had become in its first ten years, claiming that in 1913 the task of building a highway across the United States was "impractical and impossible" and sparing no opportunity to praise the accomplishments of the Lincoln Highway Association and the visionary character of Carl Fisher, who had initially organized the group, claiming, "the pages of this volume present a picture which ten years ago was a dream laughed at by many."[59] The Highway is called "the backbone of the developing Federal Highway System," bisecting the "heart of the nation," and "the best-known road in the world," whose construction and improvement was brought about by more effort and expenditure than any other single road in the world.[60] The *Road Guide* credits the Association for inspiring numerous other organizations that also advocated for the construction of similar highways and for prompting widespread public support for better roads. In the prose of the *Road Guide*, "the public, once indifferent to proper road improvement, now votes funds by the hundreds of millions, and states which ten, nay five, years ago were content with mud and dust, now clamor for bigger and even bigger highway building programs from their public servants."[61]

[59] Perhaps hyperbolically, the 1915 edition contains the line, "To Fisher, forever, goes the credit for fathering the great idea which, in its manifold ramifications, has meant so much to America in bringing order, progress and system into our road building" and claims, "almost the whole history of modern road development in this county" had occurred since the watershed year of 1913 (8). The hubris may not be surprising, considering the LHA was formed only a decade after the first successful transcontinental automobile trip.
[60] 1924 *Road Guide*, 107.
[61] 1924 *Road Guide*, 137.

Whereas in 1913 fewer than 150 automobiles drove the Lincoln Highway, by 1923 that number had skyrocketed to an estimated 20,000 automobiles that journeyed to the Pacific coast from east of the Mississippi River.[62] In the hyperbolic language of the *Road Guide*, "long distance motor traffic is no longer a novelty in this country; it is becoming the rule. A motor trip of three thousand miles no longer creates comment."[63] This was certainly made easier by the added details of the current *Road Guide*, which divided the route into 31 segments of approximately 100 miles each, "as near to a moderate day's drive from one point where accommodations can be secured, to another like point."[64]

Examining the fifth edition of the *Road Guide* provides a remarkable picture of what long distance automobile travel and auto tourism was like in 1924. Many entries for towns are also accompanied by small advertisements for hotels (frequently touted as "fireproof") and garages. There are directions to nearby campgrounds, small images of local scenery, brief mentions of historically significant events for many towns, and numerous warnings of unprotected railroad crossings and potentially bad road conditions. As in the 1915 edition, the 1924 edition of the *Road Guide* spares little opportunity to castigate Iowa for its particularly poor road conditions in the spring. The introduction to Iowa's section in the *Road Guide* includes these sentences:

> Proper highway development in Iowa is still retarded by a very inadequate highway law which puts the development of economically surfaced through highways at the mercy of county option. Any one reactionary county can block the proper connected improvement of an important state and interstate highway or an intra-county fight over location can hold up state improvement. Until the law is modernized, thru traffic in Iowa is likely for some years to find even the State Highways varying in condition as county lines are crossed.[65]

[62] Ibid, 37.
[63] Ibid, 150.
[64] Ibid, 13.
[65] 1924 *Road Guide*, 338-339.

By 1924, the alluded-to edge of civilization (where accommodations and fuel could easily be found) had been pushed westward from Omaha to Cheyenne. The *Road Guide* was happy to report that Nebraska, whose 460 miles were the longest single-state portion of the Lincoln Highway, had upgraded the majority of the road to gravel. To demonstrate how far Nebraska had come in its highway construction over the past nine years (and perhaps subtly to shame neighboring Iowa for its negligence), one page shows a photograph taken in 1915 of an automobile stuck in mud up to its axles being extracted by a team of horses somewhere in western Nebraska. The caption puts the word "travel" in quotes, praising the "wonderful improvement [that had] taken place since" that could "only be realized by those who drove the route then."[66]

The 1924 edition includes the history behind the construction of various segments of the highway, particularly in the West. As of May 1, 1924, more than a third of the Lincoln Highway mileage was graded gravel with about 15 percent concrete and roughly the same amount dirt.[67] The mileage of the nine different material categories listed for road types was enough for the LHA to claim the Lincoln Highway to be "80 percent excellent" with the worst of the remaining 20 percent running to the south of the salt flats in western Utah.

To demonstrate the advancements in road construction, the LHA financed and built what they called the Ideal Section of highway in northwest Indiana on the fringe of the Chicago suburbs. Running between Dyer and Schererville, the one-mile stretch of road was intended to show what the rest of the highway might look like if built with unlimited funds.

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[66] Ibid, 374.

[67] 1924 *Road Guide*, 145. The remainder of the highway was composed primarily of concrete, brick, and macadam.

Consisting of forty foot wide slabs of concrete poured over reinforced steel mesh, the four-lane Ideal Section could comfortably accommodate 15,000 passenger automobiles and 5,000 trucks per day. The design elements for the Ideal Section included a 100 foot right-of-way, illumination with electrical lights, adequate drainage, an adjacent footpath for pedestrians, and curves (if not eliminated altogether) with a radius of less than 1,000 feet. These features, a significant improvement over the rest of the highway, would enable traffic to move at 35 mph.[68]

Not only would the Ideal Section display the highway's functional capabilities; it would be an example of the aesthetic possibilities as well. Landscape architect Jens Jensen, who was also a key designer for Chicago's park system at the end of the nineteenth century, worked with the Lincoln Highway Association to plan the look/aesthetic of the Ideal Section. In a short essay appearing in the 1924 edition of the *Road Guide*, Jensen called for the planting of trees adjacent to roads so that highways are more congruous with the natural environment. According to Jensen, roadside foliage should showcase native plants and be determined by the nearby geography. Doing so would make the highway become "part of the general landscape and enhance the beauty of its surroundings as far as this is possible for a highway to do." As the aesthetic spokesman for the Association, he wrote, "We want this expression of freedom along the open road. We want shadows and we want sunlight. We want the comfort of shady lanes and we want the beautiful outlooks over the surrounding country."[69] Calling roadside planting "a very important part of a great cultural

[68] Ibid, 154-155. Notably, on page 161 the lighting of the Ideal Section is compared to what had already been put in place on the Albany-Schenectady Highway in New York, an important place in the history of American transportation as the route followed one of the first sections of the Erie Canal to be built a century earlier.
[69] 1924 *Road Guide*, 165.

movement of our people," Jensen's ideas helped demonstrate how a purely function highway could transform into something more aesthetically pleasing.

THE LAST DAYS OF THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

The original incarnation of the Lincoln Highway Association disbanded in 1928, believing the organization to be obsolete because their goal of promoting good roads had been achieved. A history of the highway and its namesake organization was published in 1935 by the Lincoln Highway Bureau, a group founded in 1931 "to perpetuate the ideals of the founders of the Lincoln Highway," but by then the road had been subsumed into the Federal Highway system, becoming Route 30 in many states.[70] In many places the road continued to be known locally, though not officially, as Lincoln Way, and numerous businesses with names like Lincoln Garage and Lincoln Motel served as a reminder of the highway's prior name.

George Rippey Stewart, addressing the question, "Why did you not choose the Lincoln Highway" as the subject of his book instead of U.S. 40, wrote, "'The Lincoln Highway is dead!' The name, to be sure, survives in local usage. But the Lincoln Highway Association closed its offices in 1927, and most of its red-white-blue rectangles have long since been removed from highways to make way for the white shields of the current national system."[71] Stewart's opinion indicates how many people felt about the road made obsolete by progress: it was no longer relevant; as a relic of the past it existed mostly in

[70] Lincoln Highway Bureau, *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade that Made Transportation History* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935). The copy in the possession of the University of Texas Library, which was a gift from the Bureau in 1937, was apparently read very infrequently until the late 1980s, coinciding with a general increase of interest in historic roads. The due date slip shows the book was checked out in 1937 (twice), 1939, 1942, 1956, 1966, 1978, 1988, 1989, 1990 (twice), 1992, 1995, and 2000.
[71] Stewart, 9.

name only. Following the establishment of the Lincoln Highway Bureau in 1931, there were attempts to revive the Lincoln Highway Association in 1938 and 1950 but none gained much traction.

It would not be until the 1970s that a few scholars and amateur historians began photographing and writing about the sites along the older highways, archiving an early roadside culture that was rapidly disappearing. By that time the Interstate Highway System had become the primary mode of long-distance automobile travel in the United States, drawing much of the clientele away from the businesses along the old Federal Highway System. Landmarks from an earlier era of mobility such as motor courts, auto camps, and diners were bypassed in favor of national motel chains and fast food restaurants. Many of the sights familiar to an earlier generation of travelers such as Burma-Shave signs and barns painted with advertisements had disappeared because of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965. In discussing the changes that had taken place along US 40, the Vales acknowledge that much of what Stewart had photographed in 1950 had disappeared by 1980, remarking, "We are saddened by the loss of the special character of old U.S. 40. Our photos reveal that much of the pavement of U.S. 40 remains driveable and that most of the features which Stewart portrayed are still identifiable, but that the essence of the highway, the reality that was created by a shield with a number on it, will never be again."[72]

John Baeder wrote one of the first books concerned with rapidly disappearing roadside culture, focusing on his own nostalgia for a bygone era of automobility in his 1982 book *Gas, Food, and Lodging*. As part of the then-burgeoning photorealist movement, Baeder began painting versions of tourist postcards in the early 1970s. Page after page of

[72] Vale and Vale, 181.

Gas, Food, and Lodging is filled with his painted images of postcards from the 1920s through the 1950s depicting tourist cabins, neon signs, gravity feed gas pumps, and roadside attractions long since disappeared. Baeder's work is placed alongside the original postcards with some of his own commentary. He writes, "Postcards and their images played a pivotal part in my life. They were a catalyst in setting thoughts and feelings in motion. Postcards were responsible for a career change and a new beginning. They provided a source of energy and rebirth. I felt the need to return to my source of inspiration, to pay homage, to re-live some fantasies, and to turn them into realities."[73] For Baeder, the visual experience of these postcards is larger than life: "I project myself into the image as if I were actually there. There is an element of fantasy in wishing to go *inside* the picture of a café, for instance, and to sit at the counter and look at the surroundings and feel the environment, smell the odors, and listen to the tapestry of sounds."[74]

Baeder's photorealist work blurs the distinctions between fantasy and reality, as does his particular nostalgic experiences. "During my travels, I sometimes enter a new town that's been untainted by present-day touches of plastic signs, rehabilitation, and the usual phony-décor that marks our commercial strips," he explains, "I will drive down the street and feel as though I were passing into a postcard image stuck in time-space…An intense curiosity propels me to want more images from the postcard, so I may travel *into* the card, and wander around as if nobody were there."[75] He calls his obsession *postcarditis*—an intoxicating malady for which the only cure is the acquisition of more postcards.

[73] Baeder, *Gas, Food, and Lodging* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1982), 9.
[74] Ibid, 11.
[75] Baeder, 11.

Baeder credits the American Bicentennial with a renewed interest in postcards depicting the American roadside. “Small towns are the fiber that makes up the weave of the American character,” he writes, “I consider these postcards (those depicting small town main streets) the most unique and extensive visual record of our cherished past.”[76] Part of *Gas, Food, and Lodging* covers Baeder’s quest to revisit some of the remaining places depicted on postcards in his collection. Some were still in operation when Baeder wrote his book (though the Stop Again Service in Texarkana had become a pawn shop by then), and his photographs and paintings document the changes that had happened to these places between the 1920s and early 1980s. Ultimately, Baeder’s work sees these early roads as a portal to an unattainable past, what David Lowenthal calls a foreign country.[77]

When Stewart proclaimed the death of the Lincoln Highway in 1950, he was correct up to a point. The auto trails were made obsolete by the 1926 Federal highways, which would in turn soon be made secondary by the Interstates. However, interest in the road never fully went away. The Lincoln Highway was the subject of a 1974 *American Heritage* article, though it focuses entirely on the road’s development up to 1919, placing it more than fifty years in the past.[78] Also in 1974, a group calling itself the Lincoln Highway Rediscovery Committee formed to organize vintage automobile tours along the highway, though they were not necessarily concerned with historic preservation.

In 1985, Kevin Patrick, who would later write a book about roadside diners, completed his dissertation on how the Lincoln Highway was known and remembered by individuals living along the route in Pennsylvania. Patrick found that the road was at that

[76] Ibid, 117.
[77] David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[78] Joe McCarthy, “The Lincoln Highway,” *American Heritage*, June 1974.

time best preserved in rural areas, where people were generally familiar with the highway and where it went. By contrast, few of the people Patrick spoke to in urban areas such as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh had any idea they lived so close to what was once a major transcontinental route. In suburban areas, most seemed to be familiar with the name (often because of local businesses along the route that incorporated the name Lincoln into their names) but not necessarily where the Lincoln Highway went outside of the suburbs.[79]

That same year, Drake Hokanson wrote an article for *Smithsonian Magazine* about the roadside architecture that remained along the old highway, much of which would end up in the first book to be published about the Lincoln Highway in more than five decades. *Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* was the result of Hokanson's several trips along the original route, often requiring the consultation of 1920s guidebooks and road atlases since there were, in his words, "no markers, no painted poles."[80] He made his first trip along the highway in 1981 while a college student at the University of Iowa, using AAA strip maps and a reprint of the 1926 Rand McNally Road Atlas. He writes, "The Lincoln Highway was an expression of the national desire to bind the country from east to west. It captured the American imagination much in the same way Jackson's feat did" (referring to the first transcontinental automobile trip in 1903), "and in the same fashion as the great westward migration on the Oregon and California trails, the Pony Express, and the transcontinental railroad had a half century earlier."[81] While Hokanson's lengthy

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[79] Kevin Patrick, "Learning From the Lincoln Highway: Identity, Place and a Pennsylvania Roadscape," Doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1985.
[80] Comments made by Hokanson at the Lincoln Highway centennial event, July 2013. His book was the first to be published on the Lincoln Highway since 1935. Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988). For the original article, see Drake Hokanson, "To Cross America, Early Motorists Took a Long Detour" *Smithsonian*, August 1985.
[81] Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway*, xvi.

history of the Lincoln Highway includes a narrative of his own journeys along the highway, he still refers to the road in the past tense.

By the 1990s, collective enthusiasm for the remnants of the Lincoln Highway's roadscape among a few independent amateur historians culminated in active preservation efforts and the resurrection of the Lincoln Highway Association. In 1991, the College of Design at Iowa State University held a symposium on the road (by this time widely considered "historic"), where a handful of scholars presented papers on various aspects of the highway, including a keynote address from geographer Peirce Lewis. That same year the state of Iowa wanted to expand the right-of-way of an existing highway in rural Greene County that would result in the destruction of part of a 70 year-old piece of the Lincoln Highway. A legal injunction by local citizens galvanized support for preservation of the old highway and the state relented.

Increasing interest in the highway prompted the republication of the 1924 fifth edition of the *Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway* in 1993 and the LHA's self-congratulatory *The Lincoln Highway: The Story of a Crusade That Made Transportation History* in 1995. Both reprints include a short note from the publisher that include some general praise for the highway and its importance in American transportation history. Drake Hokanson, acting as director of the LHA, wrote in the *Road Guide* reprint,

> While the 1913 Lincoln Highway Association sought to promote and build a transcontinental highway for the nation, the 1993 Lincoln Highway Association begins work to preserve and restore what little is left of what the earlier group helped build. As of now a group of people living all across the country have the common goal of protecting what small bits of the old highway remain. While the association of 1913 looked to the future of travel, we must look to the past with a desire to keep some of that past intact for travelers yet to come…[82]

[82] Lincoln Highway Association, *A Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway, fifth edition* [facsimile reprint of 1924 publication] (Tucson: Patrice Press, 1993), ii-iii. The same press also published

Since its re-establishment in 1992, the current iteration of the Lincoln Highway Association has been active in locating and preserving the remaining original concrete highway markers and erecting new ones. Because of the attention given to the highway in recent decades, largely due to the efforts of the LHA, local and state governments have begun recognizing certain landmarks as having historical significance and putting up plaques. Starting in 1993 the LHA has organized an annual convention at different cities along the highway where members gather to celebrate their collective nostalgia. For the highway's centennial in 2013, the LHA selected Kearney, Nebraska, a town a few miles east of the highway's midpoint.

The Lincoln Highway at 100

Kearney, Nebraska, sits alongside the Platte River in a region of mixed-grass prairie known as the Sandhills. Each spring, up to 450,000 migrating sandhill cranes find their way to these hills, though the town has a relatively steady human population of nearly 30,000. Beyond migrating birds, Kearney sees its share of human travelers. Interstate 80, in this part of Nebraska the modern concrete-and-asphalt descendent of the Lincoln Highway, grants Kearney a single exit almost exactly halfway between Omaha and the turnoff to Denver.

On the town's east side is the Great Platte River Road Archway, a massive observation bridge spanning more than a football field in length above the Interstate, and an adjoining museum celebrating "170 years of transportation history through detailed displays and harrowing stories" that one can experience "as you walk over one of

between 1995 and 2009 a series of seven comprehensive books examining the Lincoln Highway through individual states.

America's busiest interstate highways."[83] The Archway, which tells a history beginning with Fort Kearney in the 1840s, discusses the site as the convergence of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails, a Pony Express route, and the routes of the transcontinental railroad and Lincoln Highway, unintentionally emphasizing central Nebraska's role in being "on the way" to somewhere else.[84] Using the hyperbolic language of boosterism, the 1924 edition of the *Lincoln Highway Road Guide* claims, "Kearney owes its thrilling romantic history to the Old Oregon Trail" and calls Kearney "a thriving city of cultured, happy, industrious people, proud of their location midway between Boston and San Francisco on the famous Lincoln Highway."[85] In short, while Kearney may not seem to be an exceptional place, it has an unusually strong connection to numerous modes of mobility and transportation, and its relative proximity to the midpoint of the Lincoln Highway made it an obvious choice for the site of the Lincoln Highway centennial celebration, held the first week of July 2013.

Calling the event a centennial may have been something of an exaggeration, 1913 being the year the highway was first announced and construction began – the highway was not completed until six years later. Two groups of vintage automobiles left from the highway's historic endpoints at New York and San Francisco, caravanning along the old route to Kearney. When the groups arrived to kick off the event, parts of town contained a mishmash of vintage automobiles from the Model T down to the lowly Rambler American. The cars had little in common except they were old, and it seemed they served more to celebrate the idea of the past itself rather than the Lincoln Highway in particular. Upon

83 Archway.org, accessed June 20, 2015.
84 Perhaps an exhibit on Interstate 80 is unnecessary since one can see the real thing several stories below while eating in a diner in the Archway.
85 1924 *Road Guide*, 389-390.

reaching Kearney, the cars paraded down Central Avenue, drawing an estimated crowd of 12,500 – a gathering equivalent to more than 40 percent of Kearney's entire population.[86]

The local Holiday Inn hosted much of the LHA festivities. There were folding cardboard displays for each state traversed by the highway, resembling enlarged postcards complete with AAA state road maps with pins showing the route – even West Virginia, whose portion of the Lincoln Highway totals four miles near the state's northernmost tip. The room was decorated with reproduction Burma-Shave signs (something not actually seen on highways since the early 1960s) and a homemade quilt showing the Lincoln Highway route.[87] One could purchase souvenirs and things related to early motor travel such as vintage gas station maps, reproduction signs, old postcards, and hotel stationery, and every manner of decal, shirt, coffee mug, and trinket with the Lincoln Highway logo on it. Each state chapter of the Association had a table, many offering books and tourist info. Some had compiled road maps with turn-by-turn directions to follow the old route, much like the original guidebooks of the teens and twenties. For example, Indiana's table offered Indiana-shaped cookies with the LHA logo in icing and Iowa's table was selling Lincoln Highway-branded wine, notable for a state not known for its wine production.

A large public celebration for the Lincoln Highway was held at the Great Platte River Road Archway as part of the centennial. Exhibits on early motor camping showed the relatively primitive accommodations available before motels were commonplace. Since

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[86] Mike Konz, "Lincoln Highway's 100th Pulls in Crowd of 12,500," *Kearney Hub*, July 1, 2013.

[87] Burma-Shave signs, typically limericks whose content could be read across a series of five or six individual signs, were once ubiquitous along rural highways in the United States until 1963 when the company was sold to Philip Morris, who discontinued the roadside advertising. See Frank Rowsome and Carl Rose, *The Verse by the Side of the Road: The Story of the Burma-Shave Signs and Jingles* (Brattleboro VT: Stephen Greene Press, 1965). Rowsome and Rose compiled nearly 600 unique limericks used in Burma-Shave advertisements.

Packard Motor Company head Henry Joy was one of the early backers of the highway, there was a parade of Packards dating to 1916. The event, which was emceed by a Will Rogers impersonator, kicked off with a performance of the National Anthem by that year's reigning Miss Nebraska. Several local dignitaries and state level politicians spoke at the event. Kearney's mayor gave the official welcome, mentioning that the celebration of the old highway "shows what transportation does and how important it is to small communities." Mary Jo Ott from the Nebraska Division of Roads, who is known locally as the voice for winter road closure announcements on the radio, gave an address *to* the highway, saying, "thank you Lincoln Highway for your years of service to our communities, state, and our country." Nebraska State Senator Gaylin Hadley urged the crowd to get off the Interstate and travel the smaller older roads that lead to "towns where you see the *real* America." A representative from the office of U.S. Senator Mike Johann announced an official resolution marking June 30th as the centennial date, calling the highway "America's Main Street" and "a symbol of Americana and the freedom that comes from driving the open road."[88]

Earlier in the week, the LHA had unveiled a new installation of bricks at the Great Platte River Road Archway. The bricks previously functioned as a stretch of original Lincoln Highway from Canton, Ohio. Given that the Smithsonian has a few panels of original Route 66 concrete from Oklahoma on display in their Museum of American History, this might not seem odd.

On the east side of Grand Island, Nebraska, lies a few hundred feet of weathered concrete. Before the street was closed to traffic, it was still being used by local delivery trucks

[88] All quotes given during the public Lincoln Highway centennial celebration, July 2013. Notes in the author's possession.

seeking a shortcut between Route 30 and an intersecting local road. There doesn't appear to be anything special about this section of concrete and up until recently there was nothing to distinguish it from many other roads on the fringe of Grand Island, itself an unexceptional city in the Nebraska plains. However, this stretch of concrete is one of the few remaining "seedling miles" financed and built by the Lincoln Highway Association in the mid-1910s. Most of these original miles have been lost to time and neglect, but this one survived long enough to have a large state historic marker placed at one end. Like an artifact in a museum, it has been closed, repurposed, designated as historic, and metaphorically put under glass and set aside for preservation. As if to underscore (or perhaps prove) its age, it was flanked by reproduction Burma Shave signs. While here on a bus tour organized by the LHA during the week-long centennial celebration, many had their pictures taken standing next to the marker. As if on cue, they began to walk the 500 feet of concrete to the west, then unsure what to do once reaching the other end, walked back. For devotees of this particular highway, there is something about this century-old fragment of road that made them feel obligated to walk its length, just as countless thousands have traveled this same route. The concrete has a certain aura for these historic highway enthusiasts, a metaphysical element that connects present-day travelers to those from the past.

The success of the resurrected Lincoln Highway Association in documenting and preserving existing traces of roadside culture has inspired the formation of other organizations and publications devoted to specific defunct routes. Dr. Harold Meeks, professor emeritus of Geography at the University of Vermont, has written a book on the Yellowstone Trail which once connected Boston and Seattle. In the introduction, Meeks directly acknowledges a debt to the re-formed Lincoln Highway Association in inspiring his own research on the Yellowstone Trail.[89]

Another auto trail that has seen renewed interest in recent years is the Old Spanish Trail. The route, running along the southern edge of the United States, was first conceptualized in late 1915 as a way to connect the historically Spanish colonial cities of San Augustine, San Antonio, El Paso, Tucson, and San Diego. By the time the highway was completed in 1929, the Federal system of highways had already been established and the Old Spanish Trail became officially designated US 90 east of Van Horn, Texas, where it followed US 80 to San Diego.

An organization dedicated to the preservation of the Old Spanish Trail called OST100 was created by San Antonio resident Charlotte Kahl in 2004. Four years earlier, a road crew clearing brush in her neighborhood uncovered a stone bench with a wrought iron "OST" decoration attached to the top. Since the discovery of the bench, Kahl has worked to locate and map existing remnants of the road, sometimes to the point of sticking a metal pole under bushes and grass to confirm the presence of abandoned asphalt. The self-proclaimed purpose of the OST100 organization is to "locate, revitalize and preserve the roadway, businesses and historic sites of the original 1920s Old Spanish Trail auto highway."[90] The organization has a rather ambitious schedule of "reenactments" planned for the centennials of various Old Spanish Trail milestones: the initial creation of the organization (2015), three separate zero-mile marker dedications (2023, 2024, and 2029),

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[89] Harold Meeks, *On the Road to Yellowstone: The Yellowstone Trail and American Highways 1900-1930* (Missoula: Pictorial Histories Publishing, 2000), vi.

[90] http://www.oldspanishtrailcentennial.com/index.html, accessed August 11, 2015. According to its website, another goal of the organization is to "revitalize and beautify the scenic original OST roadbed" so that it can become a "pleasant alternative to Interstate-10 for travelers interested in recapturing the historic ambiance of the gulf and southern border states."

and a motorcade following the original route from St Augustine to San Diego, also planned for 2029. In the meantime, OST100 has been attempting to convince the 67 counties along the route to build hike-and-bike trails along the route, apparently with limited success. Much in the same way that deteriorating segments of the Lincoln Highway are cause for enthusiasm for some people, the Old Spanish Trail carries a significance conveyed by architectural historian John Murphey, who has driven the route more than once: "When you hit a place that hasn't been changed and there's not modern development, it's a little bit transcendent. There's a section east of Tallahassee that's still red earth road. You can just imagine bobbing along in the 1920s."[91]

GAS, FOOD, LONGING: REMEMBERING PARTICULAR MOBILITIES

Murphey's quote expresses what seems to be the key motivation for organizing vintage automobile tours along old roads. These particular drivers are interested not merely in experiencing what still remains alongside specific historic roads. They go beyond nostalgia – a sense of loss – and attempt to reenact the past *in situ*.[92] This is the culmination of three levels of interest in the highway. First the material artifacts of the past are

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[91] Sarah Laskow, "Resurrecting the Original Road Trip on America's Ghost Highway," *Atlas Obscura*, August 7, 2015, http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/resurrecting-the-original-road-trip-on-americas-ghost-highway.

[92] The concept of nostalgia has seen an increasing amount of attention in the past two decades, but most scholars agree that it refers to a sense of longing after loss or absence. The term was first used in the late seventeenth century to describe a condition experienced by soldiers away from home (taken from the Greek *nostos*, to return home, and *algia*, a painful condition – literally a homesickness). The foundational text is Fred Davis, *Yearning For Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: The Free Press, 1979). Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) examines the political aspects of nostalgia and memory, especially surrounding images, objects, and monuments. Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001) examines the phenomenon as it applies to the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries. Janelle Wilson, *Nostalgia: Sanctuary of Meaning* (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell University Press, 2005) explores how nostalgia operates on a personal level. Finally, Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) discusses the role of mass culture in mediating nostalgia and forming collective cultural memories.

discovered and preserved. In the context of the roadscape it includes structures, signage, fuel pumps, road maps, and other ephemera. This preservation has been the primary activity of the Lincoln Highway Association, and is accessible to even the most casual observers of the past. Next is the importance of being in the exact place of the highway, something Drake Hokanson acknowledges in his foreword to the 1993 reprint of the 1924 edition *Road Guide*: "Perhaps if we can keep a little of the old road, tomorrow's travelers, driving Saturns and Geos, will also be able to discover their own country."[93] Finally, the most extreme act of celebrating these historic roads involve driving the actual routes in a vintage automobile, sometimes even in costume and character (and therefore quite clearly a performance), which was not uncommon to witness at the 2013 road caravan in Kearney.[94]

Like all reenactments and memorializations, the past that is remembered and performed along the Lincoln Highway is incomplete, assuming a certain level of access and mobility not historically available to all. It forgets, for example, the difficulties African American motorists faced in securing accommodations and meals while on the road, even away from the Jim Crow South.[95] Beginning in 1936, Victor Green, a U.S. Postal Service worker living in Harlem, published the *Negro Motorist Green Book* (by 1952 *Motorist* became *Traveler*; later editions omitted the word *Negro*), a guide assisting African American travelers. "There will be a day sometime in the near future," writes Green in the 1948 edition, "when this guide will not have to be published." The cover of the 1949 edition

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[93] 1924 *Road Guide* [reprint], iii.

[94] These vintage auto tours are not unique to the Lincoln Highway; the Great Race, a long-distance auto tour restricted to cars at least 45 years old that use only original factory parts, has been held regularly since 1971.

[95] See Rebecca Onion, "A Midcentury Travel Guide for African-American Drivers Navigating Jim Crow, *Slate*, February 11, 2013, www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault/2013/02/11.

includes the less-than-cryptic message “Carry the Green Book with you. You may need it.” The 1956 edition, released during the beginning of desegregation, urges drivers to be extremely cautious in following speed limits and provides advice in avoiding “embarrassing situations” – situations that could very realistically include physical violence. In towns without hotels open to African Americans, families listed their own residences in the *Green Book* as welcome places for weary travelers. Victor Green published the *Green Book* annually until his death in 1960 and it continued to be published for another six years, by which time it also included tips for African Americans traveling in parts of Europe, South America, and Africa.[96]

Though women were among the first to travel the Lincoln Highway and write about their experiences, they have consistently been left out of the road’s history. After touring the road with her husband, Effie Gladding wrote *Across the Continent by the Lincoln Highway* in 1914, the first full-length book to discuss transcontinental motoring. Her essay in the first edition of the Road Guide, “Foreword to the Woman Tourist,” speaks highly of the scenery and wildlife encountered along the highway, all but promising encounters with “Western people traveling as of old in prairie schooners across the plains” and Wild West shows with “such use of the lasso and such horseback riding as you have never witnessed before.”[97] Before her widespread fame as an etiquette expert, Emily Post was commissioned by *Collier’s Magazine* in 1916 to cross the United States on the Lincoln

[96] Gustavo Solis, “Jim Crow-Era Travel Guides for Black Families Now Online Through Schomburg,” *DNAinfo.com*, October 25, 2015, http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20151026/central-harlem/jim-crow-era-travel-guides-for-black-families-now-online-through-schomburg. Nearly every single edition of the *Green Book* has been digitized by the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, part of the New York Public Library, available at digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/the-green-book, accessed March 20, 2016.
[97] 1915 *Road Guide*, 8. She is, however, referred to in the Guide as Mrs. Thomas S. Gladding, consistent with the norms of the time.

Highway, her story later published as *By Motor to the Golden Gate*. Like Gladding and Post, Beatrice Massey's 1919 travelogue *It Might Have Been Worse* describes her journey on the Lincoln Highway. It should be noted, however, that each of these women traveled the highway with male companions (Gladding and Massey with their husbands and Post with her son Edwin) and at least two of these women experienced the trip entirely from the passenger seat. While it may not have been considered socially acceptable for women to travel the highway alone during the 1910s, their presence and literary contributions are undeniable, something not exactly emphasized anywhere during the centennial celebration.

While the public event at the Archway was geared toward families, the LHA convention (not open to the general public) was populated overwhelmingly by white men in their sixties and seventies (and older), as were the majority of drivers of vintage automobiles in the caravan. Conceivably, many of the LHA members can recall driving the highway in the postwar years, but certainly none were alive to experience getting stuck in the mud in Iowa's portion of the Lincoln Highway or other common difficulties of driving the road in the 1910s and 1920s. These performances neglect to acknowledge the sheer difficulty of driving the Lincoln Highway, especially in its first few years. The various remembrances reduce the road into a series of icons such as Burma-Shave signs and idealized vintage cars restored to better than new condition. They pass over the frequent inconveniences of long distance travel in comparatively primitive cars that were much more subject to mechanical breakdown than today.[98] In short, the Lincoln Highway centennial event (and by extension other nostalgic events celebrating road culture such as

[98] My grandmother and great-grandfather drove from Grand Rapids, Michigan, to Pasadena, California, in 1934 after the death of my great-grandmother. They kept a small journal of their trip which, in addition to describing the weather and scenery and recording the cost of lodging, meals, and gasoline, noted eleven flat tires.

vintage auto tours) commemorate only particular aspects of road travel, accessible only to certain groups, only up to a certain point in time.

Still, this may not be surprising, given that outdated modes of transportation seem particularly ripe for nostalgia, which according to Fred Davis is almost always positive and conservative. Thomas Allen's poem "Low Bridge" memorializes the first fifty years of the Erie Canal, when barges were pulled by mule rather than propelled by steam engines. Allen wrote the poem in 1905 about twenty-five years after mule-drawn barges ceased pulling cargo, though Allen himself was born in 1876 and could not possibly have witnessed firsthand this method of transportation. After railroads converted their fleets of locomotives from steam to diesel in the 1940s and 50s, numerous local organizations formed dedicated to preserving the now-obsolete engines in transportation museums and town squares. Similarly, the nostalgia surrounding the Lincoln Highway celebrates an archaic form of road transportation insofar as the vast majority of vintage automobiles that drive the highways as a reenactment of the past are not driven for purposes like commuting or running errands, even as few, if any, of their drivers are old enough to remember what they are reenacting.

The success of the Lincoln Highway Association in organizing a centennial for their namesake highway suggests that no other single North American road of its era holds such an important place in the imagination. Other highways, even ones deemed historic, are not given birthdays; we pass over and across them, treating them as a means to a physical end. Even if travelers happen to appreciate decaying roadside relics, these old roads are still ultimately not given much more consideration beyond the fact that they are what lie between (and beneath) us and our destinations. Despite being noteworthy feats of engineering, Interstate Highways don't evoke the same connection as earlier roads. The first stretch of new Interstate Highway was laid out in east-central Kansas in 1955 but it seems unlikely that there will be a hundredth birthday celebration for Interstate 70 in 2055.

As discussed earlier, much attention has been given to the Lincoln Highway's past in recent decades. Aside from the rebirth of the namesake association and repeated conventions for roadscape enthusiasts, there has been a comprehensive mapping project. The LHA website shows more than 3,000 points of interest marked with the LHA logo and the location of more than five hundred original concrete highway markers.[99] Google street view now shows US 30 as "Lincoln Highway" prioritized in many cities. Some newer Garmin GPS receivers now say in their turn-by-turn navigation instructions "turn on Lincoln Highway" instead of route 30, suggesting the road has not only reentered the consciousness of the general public, but has become a road that *is*, not *was*.

The current incarnation of the Lincoln Highway Association has been quite successful in raising awareness of the highway and increasing tourism in the towns along its route, many of which had been seeing a slow decline for decades. And it is clear that the organization's accomplishments have led to the creation of new groups focused on documenting and preserving the Old Spanish Trail and Dixie Highway, among others. However, it is unlikely that this increased attention to the historic roadscape will attract legions of new enthusiasts, nor will it reverse the decades of negative economic impact inflicted upon small towns bypassed by Interstate highways, but the LHA has been instrumental in preserving a few roadside filling stations in the Midwest and a motor court in west-central Pennsylvania, for what it's worth.

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[99] See the Lincoln Highway Association website, https://www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org, accessed Mar. 17, 2016.

In the face of troubling social change and global political and economic instability, many people have sought comfort in the relics of the past. As Marita Sturken has shown, Americans have gravitated toward a form of kitsch consumerism in the last couple decades in order to deal with national trauma.[100] Just as tourists visiting sites of tragic events can purchase souvenirs without engaging with the social and political causes of those events, the specific type of traveler invested in the preservation of historic highways can purchase a plethora of kitsch objects without considering the exclusivity of celebrated narratives of historic automobile travel, nor the environmental impacts of a century of mass automobility.

The Lincoln Highway, like all places, has a temporal dimension. In some areas, it is difficult to designate ***the*** Lincoln Highway, as segments were truncated, extended, modernized, straightened, and rerouted over the history of the route's existence. Even a decade after the opening of the Lincoln Highway, the mileage had changed due to the elimination of curves and detours. In 1913 the mileage was officially declared at 3,389, shortened by five miles two years later, and by 1924 shortened even further to 3,142 miles.[101] The decade-long mapping project set the original route and all subsequent realignments at 5,869 total miles. These differences have apparently stirred up an internal debate among Lincoln Highway enthusiasts. Purists believe only the pre-1928 alignments "count" as the official highway route because 1928 was the year the original Lincoln Highway Association disbanded after proclaiming "the American people had been fully

[100] Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
[101] 1924 *Road Guide*, 17.

educated to the value of good roads" (the stated goal of the organization), though this view is in the minority.[102]

Some devotees attempt to drive every mile of every alignment of the Lincoln Highway, a difficult task considering the number of times certain segments have been straightened, re-routed, or buried under portions of Interstate Highway. This particular way of driving on the Lincoln Highway treats road mileage as a thing to be accumulated – a way of traveling that is less concerned with scenery or historical significance (or any specific aspect of the past) than checking a box off one's list of travel goals. This intentional way of traveling, different from how most scholars have theorized tourism, will be explored as a practice of collecting in the next chapter.

[102] Comments made by LHA Secretary Gail Hoag, speaking at the 2013 centennial event. Hoag did not mention the primary reason the 1913-1928 LHA disbanded: the fact that all auto trails were either absorbed into the Federal Highway System starting in 1926 or ceased to be officially designated as such.

Chapter 2: Just Passing Through: Place Collectors, Collecting Place

"I've been to Boston, Charleston, Dayton, Louisiana,
Washington, Houston, Kingston, Texarkana,
Monterey, Ferriday, Santa Fe, Tallapoosa,
Glen Rock, Black Rock, Little Rock, Okaloosa,
Tennessee, Hennessey, Chicopee, Spirit Lake,
Grand Lake, Devil's Lake, Crater Lake, for pete's sake…"

"I've Been Everywhere," a song originally performed by Australian singer Lucky Starr and later popularized in the United States by Hank Snow and Johnny Cash, begins with a narrative of a hitchhiker picked up by a truck driver along a lonely desert highway. The driver asks the traveler if he's ever "seen a road with so much dust and sand," to which the traveler replies, "Listen, I've traveled every road in this here land." He explains, "I've been everywhere, man / Crossed the deserts bare, man / I've breathed the mountain air, man / Of travel I've had my share, man / I've been everywhere," and then lists in rhyming couplet some of the many places he claims to have been.

While the American version is much better known, the original version of the song features a list of Australian towns such as Mooloolaba, Woolloomooloo, and Turramurra, along with their rhyming counterparts. Though the song is apocryphal, there is someone out there who, according to the list, actually *has* been everywhere. In December 2009, an Australian man named Peter Harris (appropriately called Everywhere Man by the Australian media) set out to visit all 94 places named in the song – a task that took 21 months and more than 30,000 km to accomplish.[1]

[1] Peter Harris. "Overview," *I've Been Everywhere*, last modified September 3, 2013, http://www.ivebeeneverywhere.com.au.

Harris' quixotic endeavor is one example of a very intentional form of travel and mobility that this chapter investigates. It would seem that Harris' goal is not that unusual, as there are also many people with travel goals such as visiting each unit in the National Parks System or watching a game in every major league ballpark.[2] Many with these goals choose to keep track of their travels with photographs, souvenirs, checklists, or personal maps. There is a difference, however, between merely keeping track of places visited and consciously attempting to add more places to the map, in which case traveling becomes a goal in itself. This type of traveler has taken up the task of moving about in particular ways in order to accumulate specific experiences that occur in categories of places for which there is a set limit, engaging in what I am calling "place collecting."

This chapter explores the different ways these intentional acts of mobility function as practices of collecting. Following the scholarship on collecting and material culture, I maintain that these practices contribute to a sense of identity for their participants. Because place collecting often involves nothing more than having one's body occupy a particular place and not necessarily doing or seeing anything, these practices often expose tensions between traveling *through* place versus the embodied knowledge that comes with *experiencing* place over an extent of time. In short, the numerous iterations of place collecting both remake places and landscapes and shape the identities of their visitors.

One theorist this project is indebted to is Yi-Fu Tuan, whose explanation of the differences between space and place are crucial to understanding place collecting. According to Tuan, space and place are the basic components of the lived world. *Space* is indistinct, unfamiliar, abstract, and vague while *place* is more meaningful, valuable, and

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[2] These practices are, perhaps not surprisingly, most common among the middle and upper classes of Western Europe and North America.

familiar. Because the distinction is determined on a personal level, a single locale may simultaneously be both, depending on whose perspective is given primacy.[3] What to the outsider may seem unimportant—flyover country, a nondescript shopping center, a plaque commemorating an otherwise forgotten event—can be a locale of great importance to a place collector.

Tuan uses the term *topophilia* to describe this concept of the "affective bond between people and place or setting," rooted in and determined by personal experience.[4] To Tuan, topophilia "couples sentiment with place"[5] and is evident in the ways people (or communities of people) feel attached to familiar places. While Tuan is concerned with the ways place connects human beings to the cosmos, he also applies the concept on a much smaller scale, starting off his "study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values" at the level of individual sensory perception.[6]

A key idea in this chapter is that acts of place collecting have a tendency to flatten the distinction Tuan and most geography theorists use to differentiate *space* versus *place*.[7]

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[3] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 3.

[4] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 4.

[5] Tuan, *Topophilia*, 113. Overall, Tuan is concerned with finding the universal in the local, believing that particular landscapes provoke a sense of attachment, that architecture reflects values and ideals, and that human beings have long been searching for ideal environments in which to dwell. Describing the phenomenon, Tuan writes, "Topophilia takes many forms and varies greatly in emotional range and intensity…fleeting visual pleasure; the sensual delight of physical contact; the fondness for place because it is familiar, because it is home and incarnates the past, because it evokes pride of ownership or of creation; joy in things because of animal health and vitality" (274).

[6] See *Topophilia* chapter two, "Common Traits in Perception: the Senses." Tuan structures his subsequent book, *Space and Place*, in a similar way, titling chapter two "Experiential Perspective." One of Tuan's primary contributions is the idea that the human reality of geography is first an experience and secondly a science.

[7] One of the few exceptions is Michel de Certeau. While his conceptual formulation is consistent with Tuan's, he reverses terminology of space and place, considering space to be "practiced place." See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117-118.

Space is abstract, geometric, and quantifiable; Place is individually or collectively meaningful. Spaces are defined by physical, mathematical boundaries and legal definitions; places acquire significance through human interaction. Tourist sites that are typically held in high regard due to historical significance or unusual natural features to the place collector can become little more than boxes on a checklist or pins in a map. Conversely, seemingly banal landscapes such as highways, parking lots, jurisdiction boundaries, or abstract intersections of latitude and longitude lines can be extremely important to a place collector. These practices, many of which are facilitated or even enabled through digital and electronic technologies, often remake physical locations into something different from their intended purposes.

Though scholars generally agree on the parameters of how *space* and *place* frame our understanding of location, there is some variance in conceptualizations of the interrelationships between these two terms. Consider Tuan's claim: "When space feels thoroughly familiar to us, it has become place."[8] According to Tim Cresswell's interpretation of David Harvey, place is a conditional form of permanence in the flow of space and time. Space is produced (and reproduced) for the purposes of capital, which is increasingly mobile, while place remains fixed and static. To Harvey, capital transforms abstract *space*, turning it into familiar and meaningful *place*, and then treats it as commodified and quantifiable space. Cresswell contrasts Harvey with the work of Doreen Massey, who acknowledges place as an inclusive and progressive site of social life – a matrix of fluid social relations and interconnecting flows, with permeable and often

[8] Tuan, *Space and Place*, 73.

indistinct boundaries.[9] While post-Marxist geography theorists such as David Harvey, Henri Lefebvre, and Don Mitchell identify place as both the setting for social relations and an entity that can be constructed to suit the needs of the market, this chapter is primarily concerned with the ways people remake places to suit social needs rather than the economic underpinnings of space and place.[10]

The second half of *place collecting* is concerned with specific acts of accumulation that constitute the practice of collecting. Scholars have written about collecting as a form of consumption, as an obsession, or as a heroic and selfless act of love that saves unappreciated material treasures for future generations.[11] Though collecting has traditionally been examined as an institutional practice of museums and archives, an increasing number of scholars in recent decades have acknowledged the importance of what Paul Martin calls *popular collecting*. This is distinguished from the more "traditional, rarefied world of antique or art collecting," which he calls *classical collecting*.[12] Museums have a long history of positioning themselves as arbiters of taste and class, distinguishing

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[9] For Tim Cresswell's interpretation of Harvey vis-à-vis Massey, see *Place: A Short Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 2004), chapter 3, "Reading 'A Global Sense of Place.'" For the original theorists in their own words, see "From Space to Place and Back Again" in David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996) and Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) 146-156.

[10] For the implications of the different ways space is produced and reproduced, both physically and metaphorically, see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). A discussion of the often-overlooked dimension of human labor in producing space appears in Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), chapter 1, "The Beautiful and the Damned."

[11] For a discussion of collecting as consumption, see Leah Dilworth, ed., *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003) and Russell Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society* (London: Routledge, 1995). Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion* (New York: Harvest, 1994) discusses collecting in terms of psychological obsession, as does more recent work on hoarding, notably Randy Frost and Gail Steketee, *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2010). For the idea of collecting as saving unappreciated items, see the interview with food packaging collector Robert Opie in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), chapter 2.

[12] Paul Martin, *Popular Collecting and the Everyday Self: The Reinvention of Museums* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999). Martin advances the idea that collecting reinforces self-assurance and social equilibrium in the face of destabilizing socio-economic forces.

expert from plebian. In Barbara Stafford's words, museums have increasingly focused on "representations of rational rather than personal knowledge, which has provided the criteria for distinguishing between valid and invalid motives of collectors, and legitimate and illegitimate collecting and collections, [which] had its origin in the Enlightenment ideal of 'the exhibit as a school for instruction through perceptual patterning.'"[13] This is perhaps the most important distinction between museums and private collections – "that between scientific rationalism and individual predilection; objectivity and subjectivity; the institutionally sanctioned representation of knowledge and the subject's individual expression of his or her world."[14] It is the popular, personal, and individual form of collecting that this chapter is concerned with.

COLLECTING THE IMMATERIAL

The majority of scholarship on collecting is concerned with tangible material objects and their importance in the lives of their collectors – as a means to display wealth and taste, contribute to a life narrative or self-identity, or deal with nostalgia and loss – rather than on accumulations of intangible experiences. In fact, most scholars focus exclusively on material items in their definitions of collecting.[15] Russell Belk, however, is

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[13] Barbara Stafford, *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1994), 218. See also Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). For a discussion of how museum exhibits reflect a narrow (often white, patriarchal) set of ideologies, see Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936," *Social Text* 11 (Winter 1984-1985): 20-64.

[14] Anthony Shelton, ed., *Collectors: Expressions of Self and Other* (London: Horniman Museum and Gardens, 2001), 14.

[15] For example, material culture scholar Susan Pearce, whose work has been very influential in giving serious attention to collectors, defines collecting as "the gathering together and setting aside of material objects." Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation Into Collecting in the European Tradition* (Routledge: London, 1995), 3. Because a majority of scholars approach collecting from the perspective of material history and focus on it less as a cultural practice, collecting is often framed in terms of maintaining control over the material world. Susan Stewart, for example, discusses the miniature and the souvenir in terms of ways collectors demonstrate the illusion of control and mastery of the world. Critiquing binary systems of material/immaterial, tangible/intangible, and stable/unstable, Stewart emphasizes the illusion of

one of the few to acknowledge the immaterial aspect of collecting. He writes, “The things collected are generally tangible objects, but could potentially be experiences, as with someone who collects travel destinations or sexual partners.” In *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, Belk offers a definition of collecting that encompasses more than just material items: “collecting is the process of actively, selectively, and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences.”[16] Elsewhere, Belk more explicitly includes the immaterial in his definition: “Items in a collection, as we construe it, may be material objects, ideas or experiences (e.g., travel, restaurant or concert experiences, either with or without tangible manifestations of these experiences).”[17]

Aside from incorporating immaterial experiences into definitions of collecting, Belk includes a profile of a university chemistry instructor named Jeff, who considers (as Belk does) his tattoos a collection. Jeff’s first tattoo, reflecting his interest in martial arts, was of a samurai warrior. “He soon got a tiger on the other shoulder,” writes Belk, “and slowly began to build his collection with mountains and ‘oriental’ scenery linking the two tattoos across his back.”[18] Susan Pearce and Paul Martin include an interview with retired civil servant Michael Kickham O’Farrell, who acknowledges his assortment of tattoos constitutes a collection: “I certainly like to construe myself as a work of art, but I don’t know about anybody else. But yes, I do enjoy my collection of tattoos and I treat them very

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control over the material, which is often forgotten to be subject to decay, damage, theft, vandalism, and patina. See Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). See also the introduction to Belk, viii.

[16] Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, 67.

[17] Russell Belk, “Collectors and Collecting” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections,* ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), 317.

[18] Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, 85.

much like pictures or drawings and things like that, and other antiques I've got."[19] Tattoos, like the things in a collection, are highly meaningful and demonstrate, as material objects do, a person's interests or life events. While tattoos could still be considered material things, they differ from most collectibles in that they cannot be sold, traded, or auctioned.

Regina Blaszczyk describes a shift in consumption in which what she terms "cultural software," entertainment experiences, have started to replace "cultural hardware," things themselves, in consumer identity.[20] With the proliferation of mass-produced "collectible" objects in late capitalism—everything from fast food soda cups and cereal boxes to action figures and commemorative plates "limited" to 10,000 pieces—something unique is lost in the practice of collecting. As Phillip Blom puts it, "The gained availability goes hand in hand with a loss of authenticity, and the hunger for the real, the unique and the rare becomes even stronger." To distinguish themselves from the masses of other collectors, those with more disposable income pursue rarer and more expensive items. Blom writes, "Collectors search for limited editions, for rare misprints, first editions, and objects with interesting faults precisely because they re-establish this uniqueness, while others turn their back on the mass market altogether and collect things that are not and cannot be mass produced: antiquities and old masters, seashells, butterflies."[21] Though only material items find their way into Blom's list, experiences constitute a category of things

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[19] Susan Pearce and Paul Martin, eds., *The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting, Volume 4, Contemporary Voices* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2002), 232. For another profile of an individual that collects tattoos as a way to materially connect with the past, see Daniel Miller, *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 83-89.
[20] Regina Blaszczyk, *American Consumer Society, 1865-2005: From Hearth to HDTV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5.
[21] Phillip Blom, *To Have and to Hold: An Intimate History of Collectors and Collecting* (New York: Overlook Press, 2002), 167.

that also cannot be mass produced, and in terms of collecting place, the social importance of the difficult-to-reach locale mirrors that of the rare or valuable object.

Though the study of household items conducted by sociologists Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton in the late 1970s is not concerned with immaterial experiences, it does recognize how possessing and collecting things can carry enormous symbolic importance. In their words,

> Meaning, not material possessions, is the ultimate goal in [people's] lives…People still need to know that their actions matter, that their existence forms a pattern with that of others, that they are remembered and loved, and that their individual self is part of some grand design beyond the fleeting span of mortal years…The battle for the value of life is fought in the arena of meaning.[22]

To the human subjects of Czikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton's study, the meanings of objects are individually constructed and help "discover and cultivate a network of meanings out of the experiences of his or her own life."[23] Objects themselves, and particularly their symbolic qualities, interact with people, helping constitute a central aspect of the human condition.

According to their findings, the act of possessing things has numerous functions including mediating conflicts within the self, expressing qualities of the self, functioning as status symbols, helping to distinguish one's place within a social hierarchy, providing a sense of belonging and social integration, and fulfilling the "need to demonstrate that one is alive, that one matters, that one makes a difference in the world."[24] Taking these findings

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[22] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 145. Susan Pearce focuses on this same passage in the conclusion to her own study on the symbolic meaning of collecting in *Collecting in Contemporary Practice* (London: Sage, 1998), 184, and hints at a similar idea in *On Collecting*, 166.
[23] Czikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 87. The objects discussed most commonly in their study include mementos, souvenirs, photographs, appliances, furniture, and gifts.
[24] Ibid, 27.

into account, it is clear that the most important feature of possessing is not necessarily the objects themselves, but the meanings produced by ownership and the experiences connected to each piece of a collection. And if experience is a central component to collecting, the material objects themselves are secondary. In fact, several hobbies mimic collecting in that they are cumulative but not reliant on the presence of physical objects.

Cinemania follows five New York residents who essentially collect the experience of watching as many films as possible. They all know each other but don't socialize with or seem particularly friendly toward one another. Jack, the youngest of these cinephiles, says, "I don't go to weddings, I don't go to funerals, I don't visit people in the hospital" if there is a scheduled screening. According to his list of every film he has seen since late 1986, in a single year Jack watched more than 1,000 films. Bill has put off getting a "real career" because "I'm afraid that if I became a lawyer I wouldn't have time to study philosophy and go to films." Roberta, the only woman profiled in the documentary and the self-proclaimed "queen of cinemaniacs," first became interested in film in 1950 with the goal of seeing films from as many countries as possible. She keeps every single ticket stub from each film she sees, once lashing out violently at a clerk who had ripped Roberta's ticket stub, prompting MoMA management to revoke her membership. She then attempted to circumvent this inconvenience by arriving at the theater wearing a wig and lots of makeup but was ultimately unsuccessful.[25] The profiles in *Cinemania* are extreme examples that demonstrate the deep dedication of some people to the pursuit of accumulating experiences.

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[25] *Cinemania*, directed by Angela Christlieb and Stephen Kijak (2001; New York: Winstar Studios, 2003), DVD.

Aside from watching films, there is a subset of collecting that involves things like consuming food in every single location of a particular restaurant chain. In a February 2015 interview on NPR's *Fresh Air*, writer Philip Connors discusses a tip he received while working for the *Wall Street Journal* that a man named Peter Holden was attempting to eat at as many different McDonald's locations as possible:

> We met for lunch, naturally at a McDonald's, in lower Manhattan. He had these file folders full of notes about each and every one of these visits he had made to McDonald's over the years – what he had eaten, where it was, what the décor was like, if it deviated in any way from the standard. I just found him a fascinating character – just the numbers were staggering – 10,892 McDonald's. Like, how does somebody find time for that? How do they get to that many McDonald's?

After visiting Holden's home, Connors came to realize "there was something inside of him that was a collector." Holden had filled each room of his home with Russian nesting dolls and African masks and had run out of space, so he "expanded his definition of collecting to include – as he put it, collecting the McDonald's experience." Having already been to all the state capitals and national parks, "McDonald's just raised the ante because they were opening new franchises faster than he could get to them all. So it was like the ultimate collecting quest."[26]

Starbucking is a 2007 documentary film that follows Rafael Lozano, whose name has been legally changed to Winter, on his quest to visit every corporate-owned Starbucks location in the world. When he started his endeavor in 1996 there were 1,400 locations; by the time filming took place for the documentary he had visited more than five thousand.

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[26] Dave Davies, "After His Brother's Suicide, Writer Seeks Comfort in 'All The Wrong Places.'" *NPR.org*, February 25, 2015, www.npr.org/2015/02/24/388720357. Holden is not the only person with this type of goal. In January 2013, Karl and Carol Hoepfner completed their quest to eat at all 729 Whataburger locations, an accomplishment the restaurant chain rewarded by giving the couple a minivan. See Angela Washeck, "Couple Completes Quest to Visit Every Whataburger," *Texas Monthly*, January 21, 2013.

"It never occurred to me that they would continue to build more stores," Winter says, "After several hundred stores, I was just too far into it to quit." The film shows Winter attempting to time his arrival in order to be the first customer in a new Starbucks location in the San Diego suburbs. "Being the second customer is not the same as being the very first," he says. "This is America, number two doesn't count for anything." He exits the store, proudly holding up his receipt. "That proves I was the first customer in the store. Nobody else has a receipt with an earlier date and time. I won't frame the receipt but I will keep it in my collection of ten receipts that prove I was the first customer in the store."[27]

Winter has a self-imposed rule of finishing an entire coffee from each location. One scene shows a pool of spilled coffee in the console of his vehicle. Faced with the dilemma of either drinking the spilled coffee or driving all the way back to Watsonville, Winter elects to pull out a straw and suck up the contents of the console. After *Starbucking* follows Winter on a successful attempt to break his own personal best of visiting more than 28 locations in a single day, the documentary shows an encounter between Winter and Jason Alan Pfaff ("the Denny's Guy"), who wants to visit all 1,600 Denny's locations. At this point Pfaff had been to about 300 and compared to Winter seems much more rational – not worrying about "missing out" on visiting a Denny's before it closes down. "One less Denny's I need to visit," he says.

Winter's obsession (which is not an exaggeration – in the film, he is the topic of discussion in an abnormal psychology class) begs the question about motivation. Aside from occasionally sending Winter mugs and memorabilia from Starbucks' corporate marketing teams, the company has not officially recognized him. It is not a particular love

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[27] *Starbucking: The True Story of One Man's Highly Caffeinated Journey*, directed by Bill Tangeman (2007; Los Angeles: Heretic Films, 2007), DVD.

for their coffee either: "I'm not out promoting Starbucks," Winter explains. "Nobody's ever heard me say Starbucks has the best coffee." He does say his quest is significant "in a limited context…new territory in the sense that I'm doing something no one else has done, but it's not something that's really going to benefit anybody." Indeed the only direct explanation he gives for his attempt to "collect" Starbucks locations also contains an acknowledgement of its futility: "It got old a long time ago but a goal is a goal, pointless though it may be."[28]

As definitions of collecting expand to accommodate experiences, new technologies facilitate new forms of collecting. Consider the website Pinterest, which allows users to assemble and share images in personally-created "pinboards" and create virtual collections of anything they find interesting. Matthew Vechinski uses the term "curating" to describe collecting in what he calls a *postmaterial culture*—"not the virtual replacing the material, but their coexistence and overlap."[29] His example is Goodreads, a social networking site where users assemble a virtual library consisting of book titles they have read or want to read. The site makes no distinction between physical books and alternatives such as e-books or audiobooks, making the experience of having read a particular title a more important factor than possession of a material object.

While acquiring knowledge by reading books, therefore "collecting" information, is arguably a major constitutive element of one's identity and cultural capital, book

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[28] Also from *Starbucking*.
[29] Matthew Vechinski, "Collecting, Curating, and the Magic Circle of Ownership in a Postmaterial Culture" in *Contemporary Collecting: Objects, Practices, and the Fate of Things*, ed. Kevin Moist and David Banash (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 14. Vechinsky acknowledges borrowing the term *curating* in this context from Alex Williams, "The Word 'Curate' No Longer Belongs to the Museum Crowd," *New York Times*, October 2, 2009. One of Vechinski's central claims is that in the postmaterial culture, object and experience are interdependent rather than independent.

collectors such as Walter Benjamin, whom Vechinski discusses in his article, represent an opposing viewpoint. For Benjamin, the important aspects of the relationship between book and reader were acquisition and ownership, not necessarily the experience of reading, which Vechinski rightfully points out as a key difference between *readers* of books and *collectors* of books. For this latter category, cultural capital is demonstrated more by possession, display and ownership of books rather than the retention of the ideas or knowledge contained therein.

An extreme example of a book collector is Sir Thomas Phillipps, a nineteenth-century English aristocrat, who was the single most voracious collector of books, manuscripts, and printed ephemera in history. "He amassed the largest collection of its kind ever put together by a private individual," writes A. N. L. Munby, who authored a five volume history of the collection. "Its size alone, as well as the way it was collected, defy any reasonable explanation."[30] Phillipps spent four or five thousand pounds per year acquiring books and manuscripts at the rate of forty to fifty per week on average for more than five decades. "I am buying Printed Books," he wrote at the very end of his life, "because I wish to have one copy of every Book in the World."[31] Upon his death in 1872, Phillipps had amassed a collection of 40,000 printed books and 60,000 manuscripts, in large part due to the dismantling of monastic libraries following the French Revolution. The sale and dispersal of his collection began in 1885, first to various European national

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[30] A. N. L. Munby. *Portrait of an Obsession: The Life of Sir Thomas Phillipps, the World's Greatest Book Collector* (New York: Putnam, 1967), xvii. For more on Phillipps, see Muensterberger chapter 6, "One Copy of Every Book."

[31] Munby, xvi. Despite Munby's claim about the unparalleled size of Phillipp's collection, it was quite possibly exceeded by that of Richard Heber, who amassed a library of perhaps more than 140,000 volumes by the early 1830s and who once remarked, "No gentleman can be without three copies of a book, one for show, one for use, and one for borrowers." From Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., *Dictionary of National Biography, Volume IX: Harris – Hovenden* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 358.

libraries and wealthy American industrialists J.P. Morgan and Henry Huntington, then to British booksellers and other collectors through lot auctions. The final portion of Phillipps' collection sold at a Christie's auction in 2006, 121 years after it was first broken up. For book collectors like Phillipps, identity is in part constructed through a collection of objects with symbolic value; for place collectors, it is acts of mobility rather than objects that provide knowledge and cultural capital.

An important aspect of collecting is how it contributes to one's life narrative or sense of self. This idea, advanced largely through the work of Susan Pearce, posits that collections and the objects contained therein constitute a life narrative.[32] As Roger Cardinal explains, collections are the intimate narrative that make "a continuous thread which selfhood is sewn into the unfolding fabric of a lifetime's experiences."[33] As Leah Dilworth writes, "Collecting is a narrative activity, a practice in which objects are signs for referents and require a narrator (collector or curator) to make meaning. Thus collections become sites of cultural memory and reproduction."[34] Regardless of whether it consists of objects or immaterial experiences, the collection becomes a way for the individual to demonstrate their expertise, taste, wealth, and cultural capital. To someone like self-admitted collector Walter Benjamin, "ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them."[35] As this quote suggests, possession of objects themselves (and by extension collecting) both make up one's identity and provide the opportunity to demonstrate one's life narrative.

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[32] This is especially true in Pearce's *Interpreting Objects and Collections* and *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*.
[33] Elsner and Cardinal, ed., 68.
[34] Dilworth, ed., 7.
[35] Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), 67.

Common perceptions of collectors fall into numerous stereotypic qualities. Susan Pearce has found that approximately 30 percent of adults in Britain engage in collecting, figures similar to the United States and Western Europe.[36] Despite findings that demonstrate their commonplace nature, collectors are generally assumed to be solitary males with large amounts of disposable income, singularly focused on their acquisitive pursuits.[37] Benjamin notes that the passionate collector was thought of as "behind the times" and regarded with distrust by the population at large.[38] Similarly, scholarship later in the twentieth century generalizes that while institutional collecting is inherently rational, personal collecting is considered irrational, illegitimate, and arbitrary.[39] Museums portray themselves as economically disinterested, motivated primarily by intellectual obligations, whereas individual collectors are portrayed as market participants (at best), motivated by profits, or (at worst) obsessive and antisocial hoarders.[40] While the common stereotype portrays collectors as obsessive and neurotic, the widespread nature of collecting is a normal and ordinary activity that holds much significance for people. As Richard Cox explains, "Personal collecting can seem quirky or frivolous, but it always reveals some deeper inner meaning to life's purpose."[41]

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[36] Sandra Dudley, et al, eds., *Narrating Objects, Collecting Stories: Essays in Honour of Professor Susan M. Pearce* (London: Routledge, 2011), 125. Pearce found this to be true across class and gender lines. Belk has found similar numbers for the United States.
[37] See Susan Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice* chapter 2, "Who and What," 22-48.
[38] Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 66.
[39] Roger Cardinal, "The Eloquence of Objects," in *Collectors: Expressions of Self and Other*, ed, Shelton, 25.
[40] Shelton, ed., 11. Jean Baudrillard offers a characteristic of collectors that they "can never entirely shake off an air of impoverishment and depleted humanity." From "The System of Collecting," in Elsner and Cardinal, 24. Also see Katharine Edgar, "Old Masters and Young Mistresses: The Collector in Popular Fiction," in *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World* , ed. Susan Pearce (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 80-94.
[41] Richard Cox, *Personal Archives and a New Archival Calling: Readings, Reflections and Ruminations* (Duluth: Litwin Books, 1998), 4.

Collecting Places

It is the curse and also the joy of travelling that locations,
which were infinite and out of reach to you before,
will become finite and reachable.
But this finiteness and reachability set limits in your mind,
you will never get rid of.[42]

These lines, written in 1915 by German author and impressionist painter Max Dauthendey, sum up well the complexity of place collecting. For those who participate in such hobbies, the joy of visiting new places gradually becomes a fixation. The list of new destinations (or categories of destinations) is never completely exhausted and the quixotic pursuit comes to resemble a chore. Completing the list becomes the primary motivation, making the experience of being in place secondary.

Place collecting is simply an intentional way of moving through space that treats the visited space as a box on a checklist, a behavior Alan Hogenauer calls "systematic travel."[43] Like collecting objects, place collecting is thoroughly systematic and can involve great expenditure of effort, time, and money. There are many iterations of place collecting, but the fundamental characteristic is having one's body occupy a particular place in a set category with the intention of visiting all the places in the category. There are individuals and communities devoted to, for example, climbing mountain peaks above 14,000 feet, visiting all 251 towns in Vermont, setting foot in each of the 3,143 counties in the United

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[42] English translation of the first five lines from Max Dauthendey's "Himalajafinsternis," published in *Geschichten aus den vier Winden* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1915), 43. Dauthendey's work has not yet been translated into English; these lines appear in the narrative describing a 2009 visit to the North Pole by Florian Schindler, available at http://confluence.org/confluence.php?visitid=16370, accessed January 25, 2016.

[43] Ken Jennings, *Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird World of Geography Wonks* (New York: Scribner, 2011), 157.

States, and numerous other categories of places for which there is a finite number. Essentially, if a list can be made, there are individuals attempting to visit every place on it.

Collecting and travel have a long interconnected history. For centuries, religious pilgrimages have been remembered with acquired relics.[44] Enlightenment-era European collectors accumulated a wide variety of natural artifacts and antiquities for their *Wunderkammern* to display as evidence of their widespread travels and vast knowledge. Just as wealthy Europeans brought back paintings from the Grand Tour to display the places they had been, modern tourists have no shortage of opportunities to purchase souvenirs to show off back home or to serve as reminders of their vacations. However, these examples have much more to do with the material objects brought back from visited places—objects that serve as reminders (or evidence) of travel experiences—than the places themselves.

While many critics decry the increase of placelessness, the erosion of authenticity, or the proliferation of "non-places" brought about by globalization (generally exemplified by urban landscapes), the city, suburb, airport, and highway may be to the place collector a valuable destination.[45] However, even if these places appear on one's list of specific travel goals, it doesn't mean they are dwelt upon, interacted with, or even remembered. In most cases, place collecting primarily involves having one's body occupy a particular space for only a short time and not necessarily doing anything else. Even place collectors with similar

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[44] For a discussion of pilgrimages and relics, see Ivor Noel Hume, *All the Best Rubbish* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 19.

[45] Numerous writers have discussed the ways globalization has impacted place, generally focusing on negative effects. See William Leach, *Country of Exiles: The Destruction of Place in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1999); Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Anchor, 1992); Edward Relph, *The Modern Urban Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); and Marc Auge, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (New York: Verso, 1995).

goals go about it in different ways or have different definitions of what constitutes an official visit. Chris Calvert, who finished his quest to visit all 401 locations administered by the National Park Service in 2013, said, "It's always about the experience, not just getting [a] park stamp and checking off a list…33 years of memories is what it amounts to." At first Calvert didn't understand the checklist approach to traveling, having encountered a man in Alaska who had chartered a series of flights to visit national parks, "exiting the plane for just a toe touch in each."[46]

TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS TO PLACE COLLECTING

By many standards, Chase County, Kansas, is an unremarkable place. The county, which has been steadily losing population since World War II, is home to fewer than 4,000 residents and has a population density of about four persons per square mile. It is not a place many people visit except on their way to somewhere else—Interstate 35, here part of the Kansas Turnpike and the primary route between Wichita and Kansas City, cuts across the county's corner without offering an exit. Aside from the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve and the site of the plane crash that killed Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne in 1931, not much seems significant about this 778-square mile rectangle of land in east-central Kansas.[47]

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[46] Sarah Scully, "With Trek to Historic D.C. Home, Wheaton Man has Seen Every National Park Site," *Montgomery Gazette* (Rockville MD), October 23, 2013. Calvert is referring to the "passports" issued by the National Park Service beginning in 1986 that visitors can have stamped. The National Park Travelers Club, founded in 2004, is an organization whose members share Calvert's goal of visiting every location administered by the NPS. The number of these sites has since grown to 410.

[47] William Least Heat-Moon, *PrairyErth: A Deep Map* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991) includes selected excerpts from the local newspaper *Strong City Leader* to illustrate this point: "We don't want any one to break their necks, but we wish they would do something to scare up some news…A.H. Brown and John Westbay thought they saw a wolf on Coon creek one night last week. But it proved to be Harvey Mowrey. July 15, 1886." (519). And from a century later: "Jim Schwilling visited Mrs. Charles Schwilling last Wednesday and replaced a storm window blown off during the Valentine's Day wind storm. February 25, 1988." (530).

Author William Least Heat-Moon spent thirty months exploring Chase County, uncovering obscure historical events, talking to hundreds of residents, and wandering the landscape. The result, *PrairyErth*, utilizes his concept of a Deep Map, the result of a multifaceted approach to understanding place that incorporates personal interviews, journalism, historical research, topography, and geology in order to create as thorough a depiction of a place as possible. Yet even at more than 600 pages, Heat-Moon admits, "Ninety-nine-point-nine to the ninth decimal of what has ever happened here isn't in the book. Its two hundred thousand words are my nutshell."[48] Despite the self-admitted incompleteness of his description, there are surely few with as much expertise on the minute details of Chase County as Heat-Moon because of the embodied knowledge that can only result from being in this specific place for an extended amount of time.

However, for the cumulative place collector, visiting a place may not necessarily mean any particular knowledge about that place. Because the most important aspect of place collecting is the physical act of "being there," there are different levels of interaction with place. More dedicated place collectors may know which places they have been to, but probably not much about those places aside from their own brief experiences there. As Rolf Potts writes, "In an era when ease of transportation and ubiquity of information makes mere arrival at a place less of an accomplishment than it was a generation ago, experiencing one place in depth would seem to be as much a challenge as chasing an ambitious, list-driven itinerary."[49] But in all likelihood most place collectors are less interested in creating memories or experiences than in making progress toward their travel goals.

[48] Heat-Moon, *PrairyErth*, 615.
[49] Rolf Potts, "Mister Universe," *New York Times Magazine*, November 16, 2008.

One such place collector is Barry Stiefel, who in 1998 visited all fifty states in a single week. Realizing that he had passed through twelve states in a single day during this trip, he attempted to break his own record a couple years later. Timing his next attempt to coincide with the end of daylight savings and taking advantage of a time zone change (thus giving himself a 26-hour single day), he managed to visit seventeen states between Alabama and Maine. After learning a pair of drivers visited eighteen in a single day using the same plan, Stiefel figured he could exceed that number.[50] So at midnight on October 25, 2003, Stiefel left the extreme southern corner of Maine, "determined to make momentum and internal combustion [his] friends for the day" and essentially drove nonstop for the next 26 hours. 1,700 miles later Stiefel had driven in 21 different states, by his estimation an unsurpassable number. "I was so focused on just getting the miles done that I didn't take any other photos," Stiefel said in an interview, "I was really worried about running out of time at the end of the trip, so I just focused on keeping my speed up and not slowing down for anything."[51]

For travelers who are willing to actually take the time to enjoy the journey on the way to the destination (or linger after arriving at the destination), there is the possibility of encountering the unexpected, something that scholarship on mobility tends to describe in terms of walking – the body moving through space without mechanical means such as a

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50 Stiefel's goal is not unlike the various attempts at transcontinental speed records that date back to the dawn of the automobile age. Motorcycle racer Erwin "Cannonball" Baker set more than 140 distance speed records, including his 1933 transcontinental record that stood for nearly 40 years. For a more recent iteration of distance speed records, the aptly-named Iron Butt Association creates numerous motorcycle challenges including riding from Key West, Florida to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska in under 100 hours. See Melissa Holbrook Pierson, *The Man Who Would Stop at Nothing: Long-Distance Motorcycling's Endless Road* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011) and Ron Ayers, *Against the Wind: A Rider's Account of the Incredible Iron Butt Rally* (Conway NH: White Horse Press, 1997).

51 This is from Stiefel's personal website. Barry Stiefel, "21 States In One Day." *Barrystiefel.com*, last modified November 2003. According to Stiefel, "the focus was on doing the deed and getting bragging rights, not on getting 'proof,' and Guinness wouldn't have accepted it anyway."

railroad or automobile.[52] As Geoff Nicholson claims, "there was a time when everybody walked: they did it because they had no choice. The moment they had a choice, they chose not to do it."[53] While this is an overstatement, it does suggest that walking is a thoroughly conscious way of movement. Following the ideas of Michel de Certeau, walking is one of many everyday practices that can have a political dimension. One's pedestrian route is a form of bricolage, an intentional choice among many, including transgressive paths not intended for those on foot.[54]

Certain forms of systematic walking can be considered a form of place collecting. Nicholson writes of a handful of people who claim to have walked the length of every street of major cities, completely leveling the importance given to certain streets over others. As far as the checklist is concerned, to these pedestrian place collectors in Manhattan, Broadway is the same as, say, 159th Street. According to Nicholson, the first of this type of pedestrian is Phyllis Pearsall, who in 1936 accomplished the feat in London, having walked and mapped more than 23,000 streets.[55] Two others, both connected to Columbia University, claim to have walked the length of every street in Manhattan, one in 2004 and the other in 2002 and *again* in 2005.[56]

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[52] In a way, this resembles the goal of the Situationists of the 1950s and 60s to become intentionally lost while walking the city. This form of pedestrianism is influenced by the intentional urban wanderers known as *flaneurs* who walked around rapidly modernizing European cities (Paris in particular) starting in the second half of the nineteenth century with the purpose of observing and documenting everyday street life. As Merlin Coverley points out, the motivations of these urban pedestrians shift from literary and artistic interests in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to political critique by the middle twentieth century. See Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (Herpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2010), 21.

[53] Geoff Nicholson, *The Lost Art of Walking: The History, Science, Philosophy, and Literature of Pedestrianism* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), 14.

[54] See chapter VII in Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 91-110. For an example of this kind of walking as transgression, see Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital: A Walk Around the M25* (London: Granta Books, 2002). For other dimensions of walking, see John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), chapter 4, "Pavement and Paths."

[55] Sarah Lyall, "Phyllis Pearsall, 89, Dies; Creator of 'A to Z' London Maps," *New York Times*, August 30, 1996.

[56] Nicholson, 162.

Long-distance trail hiking represents another type of pedestrian place collecting. For hikers of the Appalachian Trail, finishing the entire 2200-mile route is a significant accomplishment, something that can only be claimed if each mile is hiked, much in the same way some historic motoring enthusiasts attempt to drive every mile of the historic Lincoln Highway. An estimated 11,000 hikers have completed the Appalachian Trial, some in stages but the majority doing so in a single journey. A much smaller number of hikers complete what is known as the Triple Crown of Hiking, traveling the length of the Pacific Crest Trail, Appalachian Trail, and Continental Divide Trail, totaling nearly 8,000 miles. Fewer than 200 hikers have accomplished this feat, including one who walked all three trails in succession.

PLACE COLLECTING AND GAMING SPACE

Some of the more extreme manifestations of place collecting transform physical space into an enormous playing field. Paralleling this treatment of space as a site for competitive accumulation (for example, attempting to visit the most states in the shortest amount of time) has been a rapid growth in the number of consumer electronic devices, especially those with geolocation functions and mobile connectivity. In addition to affecting the ways people interact with space, these new digital and electronic technologies have enabled new iterations of place collecting to exist and develop.

In 2010 Berlin-based artist Aram Bartholl began hiding USB drives in walls, buildings, and other public spaces in New York City for a project he called Dead Drops, "an anonymous, offline, peer to peer file-sharing network in public space." Bartholl, whose work plays with the relationship between virtual activities on the internet and everyday life (examples include placing giant real-life versions of Google's map markers in public spaces and creating portraits generated from search results), explains further on the project's website: "A Dead Drop is a naked piece of passively powered Universal Serial Bus technology embedded into the city, the only true public space. In an era of growing clouds and fancy new devices without access to local files we need to rethink the freedom and distribution of data."[57] The idea is to encourage others to hide USB drives containing data files of the hider's choosing. Finders locate the drives, connect a laptop, and share things like poetry, images, and files related to local history. More than 1600 have been hidden since the project's inception, mostly in the United States and Western Europe, in locations as varied as the Pont des Arts in Paris and a men's restroom on the Iowa State University campus. While there is nothing inherently cumulative about finding Dead Drops, the variety of locations where these USB devices have been placed more or less equalizes the importance of their hiding places, much in the same way putting locations on a checklist does.

Foursquare, however, a social media app launched in 2009 that encourages users to "check in" to certain locations, *is* primarily about accumulation. The stated purpose of the app is to see if other acquaintances using Foursquare have checked into the same location, the person with the most visits in a sixty-day period being granted the title of "mayor." Foursquare users earn points and unlock virtual badges for checking in at multiple locations, in a way reducing them to mere stepping stones toward expanding one's collection of visited places.[58]

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[57] www.deaddrops.com, accessed Feb. 2, 2016. Unfortunately all five Dead Drops hidden in Austin are currently reported inactive or missing. For more of the artist's work, see Aram Bartholl, *The Speed Book* (Berlin: Gestalten, 2012). The content stored on the USB drives is largely unidentified on the project's website.

[58] Alison Gazzard, "Location, Location, Location: Collecting Space and Place in Mobile Media," *Convergence* 17, no. 4 (November 2011): 405-417. According to Gazzard, the aim of Foursquare, which

Foursquare cofounder Dennis Crowley believes these check-in location-based services actually affect consumer behavior. At the 2010 Where 2.0 conference, Crowley claimed Foursquare enabled people to live "different and more interesting" lives – by awarding users badges and virtual mayorships, the app rewards people "for doing a little bit of nothing."[59] This seemingly insignificant way of recording visits to particular locations, however, has for some users turned into a competitive activity, resulting in rivalries between pairs of Foursquare users over places like the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in Philadelphia and a pedestrian passage in Brooklyn known as Stabber Alley.[60] These uses of Foursquare turn space into a game while adding layers of meaning to acts of mobility.

An important event occurred on May 2, 2000, when the federal government removed selective availability, an artificial restraint placed on civilian GPS receivers, instantly increasing the accuracy of the devices by a factor of ten. The next day, computer consultant Dave Ulmer hid a medium-sized bucket filled with various items in the woods near Beavercreek, Oregon, and posted the coordinates to an online community of GPS enthusiasts, calling the idea the "Great American GPS Stash Hunt." Within three days, two different people followed the coordinates and found Ulmer's stash. Others hid their own containers and by early September there were 75 known caches in the world. By the end of 2000, geocaching was profiled on *Slashdot*, an online magazine catering to technology

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seems to have declined in popularity in recent years, is to "gather a collection of places" rather than track the journeys between them.

[59] Matthew W. Wilson, "Location-Based Services, "Conspicuous Mobility, and the Location-Aware Future," *Geoforum* 43, no. 6 (2012): 1272.

[60] Simone Oliver, "Who Elected Me Mayor? I Did," *New York Times*, August 18, 2010. According to Hiawatha Bray, *You Are Here: From the Compass to GPS, the History and Future of How We Find Ourselves* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 201, the competition can become so intense that users commonly cheat by checking in remotely.

enthusiasts, in the *New York Times*, and on CNN, giving much wider exposure to the fledgling hobby.[61]

Geocaching grew to become an activity in which more than fifteen million players use GPS receivers to hide and locate containers based on their latitude and longitude coordinates. Groundspeak, the company that oversees and moderates the activity, calls geocaching "a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices."[62] Though the activity's originators did not particularly intend geocaching to be a competitive or cumulative activity, the number of geocaches a player has logged as "found" appears prominently on each user profile, and many participants are involved in ways that for them have turned the hobby into an iteration of place collecting.

The purpose of the hobby is ostensibly to provide a reason to be outdoors or to have others visit places cache hiders consider important. Geocachers can place hides just about anywhere, provided they are not on private property (except with permission), in national parks, indoors, in a location that requires an admission fee, or near locations such as airports and railroad tracks that might arouse suspicion that the container is actually a bomb. Geocaches are hidden in some of the most inaccessible locations on earth (Antarctica, various mountaintops, and two miles into an abandoned railroad tunnel in Washington State) and most banal (in shopping center parking lots, along walking trails, and highway

[61] See www.geocaching.com/about/history.aspx, accessed February 13, 2016. Mike Teague, the first finder of Ulmer's "GPS stash," began compiling posted coordinates of similar hides around the world on his personal website. Web developer Jeremy Irish started geocaching.com in September 2000, incorporating as Groundspeak by the end of that year.

[62] From "What is Geocaching?" found at www.geocaching.com/guide/default.aspx, accessed February 13, 2016. The "treasure hunting" aspect comes from the fact that many of the larger caches contain small trinkets left either by the hider or previous finders for future finders to exchange for trinkets of their own. A more thorough description of the system of satellites that enabled GPS-based navigation appears in chapter 4.

rest areas). The placement of these hidden containers reveals numerous layers to place, where singular locations can have a multiplicity of meanings.[63]

Some participants have added their own dimensions such as attempting to be the first to find a newly-published geocache, finding a geocache in every state, finding geocaches on streaks of consecutive days, finding a hundred in a single day, or simply finding as many as possible. As of early 2016, Groundspeak claims there are 2.7 million active geocaches worldwide and 15 million participants, some of whom have logged more than 100,000 cache finds.[64] Much to the consternation of self-proclaimed purists who believe the purpose of geocaching to be getting people to visit interesting locations (tacitly, preferably on foot), so-called “numbers cachers” gravitate toward “power trails,” long series of containers hidden along Jeep trails and other rarely-traveled roads, enabling the possibility of finding several hundred geocaches in a single day. To purists, driving along a power trail from sunrise to sunset, stopping every tenth of a mile (the minimum distance between cache placements, per Groundspeak’s guidelines) to jump out of a vehicle and find a series of hundreds of identical geocaches hardly resembles hiking through the woods looking for a few different types of hidden containers.[65]

Geocaching’s conceptual ancestor is letterboxing, a hobby begun in Dartmoor, England, a rural region in the country’s southwest, in the mid-nineteenth century when a well-to-do local gentleman named James Perrott left a bottle containing his *carte-de-visite*

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[63] See Margot Anne Kelley, *Local Treasures: Geocaching Across America* (Santa Fe: Center for American Places, 2006), especially her description of the location of a geocache in Mankato, Minnesota on page 64.
[64] From www.geocaching.com, accessed February 13, 2016.
[65] Wandering around the map feature of geocaching.com shows numerous “power trails” of different lengths, mostly concentrated in the deserts of the American Southwest. One such trail, one of several in California’s Mojave Desert, has nearly 3000 geocaches. Another trail, consisting of more than 700 geocaches, runs across the entire state of Oklahoma. See also Paul Gillin and Dana Gillin, *The Joy of Geocaching: How to Find Health, Happiness and Creative Energy Through a Worldwide Treasure Hunt* (Fresno: Quill Driver Books, 2010), chapter 6, “Caching to the Limits.”

near Cranmere Pool with the instruction that others do the same.[66] The activity combines hiking, solving puzzles, and orienteering in order to locate hidden boxes containing a logbook, upon which finders leave a trademark stamp. The finder then also stamps their own personal logbook with the stamp contained in the box, much like acquiring stamps in a travel passport. The hobby was entirely confined to the region in which it started until a 1998 article in *Smithsonian Magazine* introduced it to a wider audience in the United States.[67] The publication of the article coincided with rapid growth of access to the internet, greatly facilitating the spread of the hobby. The number of letterboxes grew from 122 in the mid-1970s (all concentrated near Dartmoor) to more than a thousand just in the United States by 2001, around 9,000 in the US in 2004, and more than 90,000 across North America in 2015.[68]

Waymarking, affiliated with Groundspeak, the company that manages geocaching, facilitates a hobby described as "a way to mark unique locations on the planet and give them a voice." Participants post pictures of themselves at these locations, either identified by a street address or GPS coordinates, thereby proving their visit occurred. Groundspeak acknowledges similarities with their other, more popular hobby, but highlights some differences as well. "In geocaching, it's all about the hunt and the treasure at the end," says the company's website. "With waymarking, the location itself is the treasure. The primary difference is that no physical object is placed when creating a waymark. This added

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66 The first book published about the hobby is Anne Swiscow, *Dartmoor Letterboxes* (Totnes, Devon: Kirkford Publications, 1984). See also Chips Barber, *Cranmere Pool: The First Dartmoor Letterbox* (Exeter: Obelisk Publications, 1994).

67 Chris Granstrom, "They Live and Breathe Letterboxing," *Smithsonian*, April 1998. The article can also be found at http://www.letterboxing.org/Smithsonian.html, accessed February 4, 2016.

68 Statistics from Deirdre Van Dyk, "Hide-and-Seek for Grownups," *Time*, July 18, 2004 and the Letterboxing North America website, www.letterboxing.org, accessed February 4, 2016.

freedom allows us to enjoy certain locations that have previously been off-limits to geocaching." Groundspeak also suggests the criteria for a waymark's significance is entirely up to the user: "the entire focus is on what can be gained from the location in terms of education, entertainment, or simply your obsessive desire to document the location of every single Star Trek convention."[69] There are currently almost 650,000 waymarks worldwide consisting of locations users deem noteworthy for one reason or another. These places include those whose significance is already widely acknowledged—final resting places, historical markers, and public sculptures, and much more esoteric categories: octagonal buildings, time capsules, "you are here" maps, signs with "unusual speed limits," surveyors' benchmarks, and locations featured in the comic strip *Zippy the Pinhead*, to name only a few. While the list of subcategories is comprehensive, their content only contains those locations users make the effort to register with the website (movie locations in Austin are limited to *Office Space* and not, for example, *Slacker*).[70]

Munzee is yet another place collecting activity that could not exist without advances in geolocation technology. Taking its name from the German word for *coin* (Münze), Munzee calls itself "the next generation in global scavenger hunt games." Players affix tiny QR code stickers in locations they deem noteworthy or significant and other players then go search for them in order to scan the stickers with a smart phone, earning points. Certain types are worth more points than others, though there is no external benefit to having more points other than accumulating more than other players. In other words, points are not redeemable for anything and no one "wins" Munzee (though it is worth mentioning that Munzee's website has a feature that tabulates the top 100 finders for the

[69] From www.waymarking.com/help/faq.aspx, accessed February 4, 2016.
[70] See www.waymarking.com, accessed February 4, 2016.

previous day, week, and all-time); the points serve as a reward in themselves, and are awarded either by placing or finding munzees. The company orchestrating the activity was founded in 2011 and has grown to include about 250,000 participants, mostly in the United States and Western Europe, with more than a million so-called munzees deployed worldwide.[71]

Aside from the reward-in-itself system of points, other motivating factors (according to the twelve testimonials on Munzee's website) seem to be that Munzee provides an impetus for experiencing the outdoors without having to give up technology. "Munzee has gotten me outdoors again," writes one user. "In the city or out on a trail, I'm having a great time and enjoying the fresh air." "It is an easy and enjoyable way to explore new cities and countrysides," writes another. "Munzee lets my whole family enjoy the outdoors," says yet another. "The whole family loves electronics. My children would rather Munzee than play videogames." One calls the activity "a great counterweight to sitting in front of the computer or TV." Munzee is, according to another participant, "a great way to get my kids active and not have to take away from technology." Finally, yet another review suggests their location can be somewhat arbitrary: "Munzee is great because they can be anywhere. If you feel like a long hike, they are there – if not, maybe just in a parking lot."[72]

These are just a few examples of how many people, through activities facilitated or enabled by digital technologies (with the exception of letterboxing), choose to mark or memorialize ordinary places. Most of these activities – geocaching, waymarking, letterboxing, Dead Drops, and Munzee – are ways for participants not only to call attention

[71] See www.munzee.com, accessed February 7, 2016.
[72] These testimonials and other can be found at www.munzee.com/testimonials, accessed February 13, 2016.

to particular places (regardless of their importance to people who know nothing about these activities), but also to share them with other participants as well. Though these forms of marking place are done according to the criteria of the individual, an increasing number of organizations have formed in recent decades dedicated to recognizing the significance of places often neglected by officially sanctioned preservation groups like the National Park Service or other publicly funded groups.

One such group is Common Ground, an organization founded in the United Kingdom in 1983 that calls itself a "charity that explores the relationship between nature and culture" through various art forms including music, sculpture, poetry, film, photography, architecture, and publishing. Motivated by concerns that conservation "was becoming increasingly elitist and abstracted from day to day life," Common Ground responded to this one-sided form of conservation by organizing public artistic events that celebrate ordinary places: "those aspects of the land and of our culture that suggest an age-old intertwining of human life and the natural world…a drystone wall, a May Day fair, a field name, a holloway, an orchard." These things, "by their very nature, [celebrate] a history shared between us and the land, one that was vulnerable to the footloose excesses of development."[73]

Jurisdiction Divisions and Other Arbitrary Boundaries

A significant subset of place collecting is travelers with the goal of visiting every one of a set of political jurisdictions, many of which are somewhat arbitrarily defined—sometimes not much more than the cliché "lines in the sand." These administrative

[73] See commonground.org.uk/about, accessed February 4, 2016. For the relationship between artists and preservation, see Lucy Lippard, *On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art, and Place* (New York: The New Press, 1999) and Erika Doss, *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1995).

boundaries are defined by political agreements and legislative definitions, often without regard to the physical landscape (such as the circular northern border of Delaware) or changes in the physical landscape over time (consider the many oxbows in the changing course of the Mississippi River, leaving odd-shaped pieces of Arkansas attached by land to Mississippi and vice versa). Regardless of the reasons why these boundaries exist where they do, there are individuals and groups dedicated to the pursuit of crossing as many of them as possible.

The Travelers' Century Club (TCC), founded in 1954 at the cusp of the Jet Age, is a club whose members have visited at least one hundred different countries. While the United Nations officially recognizes 193 member states, the Travelers' Century Club counts more than three hundred "countries," due in large part to the number of territories not connected geographically to their parent nations, disputed territories, and dependent islands or archipelagoes. According to Ken Jennings, who profiles the group in *Maphead*, "there certainly does seem to be something addictive about the disease of country collecting—some practitioners call themselves 'country baggers,' as if entire nations were elusive prey to be stalked and mounted like gazelles."[74]

Jennings may not be exaggerating in his portrayal of the Travelers' Century Club, whose pursuits effectively reduce nation-states and administrative units to boxes on a checklist. After first hearing of the club in an airline magazine, software executive Charles Veley visited all 317 destinations on the TCC's official list in only two years. He then learned Guinness would only recognize his accomplishment after visiting another 33 locations comprising disputed territories, military installations, and uninhabited islands.

[74] Jennings, 153. Not to be outdone, one website that allows travelers to enter all the places they have visited counts 875 such administrative units. See mosttraveledpeople.com, accessed February 17, 2016.

Even though he calls his travels "an investment in life experience," he also acknowledges, "I became obsessed; I wanted to complete the list faster – and at a younger age – than anyone else."[75] Comparing the world to a giant buffet table, Veley says, "I wanted to go everywhere, to taste everything first so I'd know where I wanted to come back to for seconds and thirds."[76] To Veley, the quantity of destinations surpassed the importance of the quality.

The Extra Miler Club (EMC) was founded in 1973 by Roy Carson and Ed Dietz, acquaintances through their shared interest in collecting license plates. They learned that they had, independently of each other, adopted the same goal: to visit each county (or in Louisiana and Alaska, parish or census district) in the United States. Adopting the motto, "the shortest distance between two points is no fun," the EMC has since expanded their focus to include "anyone having specific travel goals" while still acknowledging "the primary purpose is to encourage members to visit every county (and equivalent jurisdiction) in every state."[77] By the EMC's count, the first to accomplish the feat was club cofounder Ed Dietz, doing so in 1976. Since then, only another fifty such travelers have visited all 3,143 counties in the United States – a noteworthy achievement considering more than eighty times as many people have successfully climbed to the summit of Mount Everest.

Completing the challenge is the sort of thing that might make it into the local newspaper with a headline similar to "Area Man Has Been Everywhere." These articles

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[75] Ben Fogle, "The one million dollar travelling man," *The Telegraph* (UK), March 8, 2004.
[76] From Potts, "Mister Universe."
[77] From the frontispiece of the EMC's quarterly newsletter, *The Extra Miler*, January 2016. Each issue of *The Extra Miler* consists of short narratives about members' recent travels, county-related trivia, and a hierarchical list charting each member's progress.

generally contain the same content: the announcement of the accomplishment, how they got started in this fixation (generally casual attention to counties visited in the past becomes a serious pursuit to intentionally visit more), what officially "counts" as a visit, statistical extremes about the size or population of certain counties, other travel goals, and a narrative about an unusually difficult county to visit. For example, 1991 completer Allen Zondlak took a 17-day trip through Alaska that included three ferry trips and 23 flights. Reid Williamson, who finished in 2007, took three separate trips to Alaska, one requiring 29 flights and a two-and-a-half day ferry ride to the western Aleutian Islands.[78] Finally, there seems to be a tacit understanding in these articles that because these travelers have been throughout the United States, they have acquired a deep understanding of the nation's landscape, highways, or driving habits, despite the fact that these visits may consist of nothing more than having one's photograph taken at the county line sign.

The Extra Miler Club held its 2013 annual convention at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada, in late June of that year. As they do each year, they meet concurrently with the American License Plate Collectors Association convention, suggesting an overlapping interest in collecting practices that extends back to the club's founding. After the group had wandered in from the main hall, the group's officers introduced themselves and spoke for a few minutes. EMC president Roy Rich showed off a multicolored map in which he had drawn the routes of different cars he had driven in various counties: "anything in yellow is in my Model A Ford, anything in pink is a modern car…I've completed 20

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[78] These specific details are from an anonymously written article titled "His journey covers all counties," *Telegram & Gazette* (Worcester MA), October 19, 1991, and John Kelly, "Been to Every State? Va. Man's Been to Every County," *Washington Post*, May 24, 2012. See also Diana Scott, "He's the County Collector," *Telegram & Gazette* (Worcester MA), April 30, 1995, and Jef Rietsma, "Ohio Woman Finished Quest to Visit all Counties in America with Stop in Barry County, Michigan," *Kalamazoo Gazette*, July 21, 2013.

states." Reid Williamson, who said he was already collecting counties when he first heard about the EMC, received a standing ovation for his past thirteen years as secretary, treasurer, and newsletter editor. His successors, Sarah Bone and Valerie Naylor, both coincidentally employed by the National Park Service, spoke next about their vision for the organization. Following the obligatory club officer elections (all were immediately reelected to "save time") each member present stood up and spoke about how much progress they had made toward their specific travel goals.

It seems that most EMC members, perhaps not surprisingly, are fond of maps and checklists. Most knew exactly how many counties they had entered (or whichever criteria they chose in order for it to officially "count"), and many brought maps with them to demonstrate their progress. Some had documentation of every road trip taken, including the times of departure and arrival, mileage, route, vehicle specifics, the price of fuel, and each town driven through. Marge Brown announced that she was planning to complete the quest on July 21st (her birthday) on Michigan Route 37 at 12:37 in the afternoon (she was born in 1937).[79] Dick Bennett showed off a road map made nearly incomprehensible with drawn-in routes, eliciting applause from the crowd. His county visits only counted "if we took a picture of the county sign and got a postmark from the post office in the county seat," no small task considering this required visiting the seat of each county during business hours on a weekday. He had a stack of twenty binders titled "Bennett County Quest" with a map of each state that showed each fuel stop, gas price, and places he and his wife stayed overnight. Each individual county had its own sheet with postmarked

[79] Notably, Marge Brown became the first woman to visit the entire set of counties without being half of a husband-wife team. According to EMC records, she is the 38th person to do so and only the third woman overall.

envelope, a photo of Bennett at the courthouse (apparently his wife took all the photos because she did not appear in any that I saw, though often a small poodle was present), along with a postcard-sized story of their experience in that county.

As it turns out, many Extra Miler Club members also collect other things – vintage glass bottles, postmarks, road signs, gas station road maps, cave visits, and 1939 license plates from every county in Washington State among the things members mentioned. Jim Claflin, who also claimed to possess a collection of more than 26,000 police and sheriff shoulder insignias, has also been to every single city in the United States with a population higher than 30,000. Charlie Aiken, "being obsessive like most of us are," was in the process of creating a website that would allow him to share his collection of county courthouse photographs, something he has been pursuing since 1974. Alan Schmidt, who entered his final county in 2002, claimed he had also seen a baseball game in 54 major league ballparks since 1962, slept overnight in every state, flown into and from every state, has played golf in every state (twice), and claimed to have eaten a Dairy Queen Blizzard in every state, "including when the only Rhode Island Dairy Queen reopened."[80]

Past Extra Miler Club events have included an excursion to the nearest point of geographical interest (often a tri-state corner) or an orchestrated event at a nearby county line—more than once a county collector has "saved" a final unvisited county to be near an upcoming EMC meeting in order to accomplish the quixotic task with other club members present. Because the 2013 meet was held in Reno, there was no conveniently located tri-

[80] All quotes and data overheard are from observations while present at the 2013 Extra Miler Club convention. Notes in the author's possession.

state corner nearby and therefore no group event, despite the proximity of a comparatively popular tourist destination, Lake Tahoe.

GRIDS AND INTERSECTIONS

Aside from the boundaries of political and administrative entities, some place collectors are drawn to visiting locations where these boundaries intersect with each other. In the United States and Canada in particular, these intersections are often based on the geometry of grid-based surveying prevalent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[81] Because they are based on mathematical increments and not physical landscape, these intersections occur in locations that might not otherwise be considered noteworthy. Yet these too are pursued by place collectors, some of whom go to great lengths to visit.

In July 2001 Brian and Gregg Butler made a visit to the boundary junction of Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan, a spot called the "Canadian Four Corners" after the creation of Nunavut in 1999. The journey involved driving more than 250 miles of gravel road to a floatplane facility at Points North Landing in far north Saskatchewan, boarding a cargo flight to a lodge at Hasbala Lake about 150 miles away, then taking a small boat a mile and a half across the lake, followed by a hike of several hundred meters "through muskeg and hordes of mosquitos" to a monument placed by a Canadian survey crew in 1962.[82] Such are the efforts undertaken by some place collectors to visit locations few others have been.

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[81] For an explanation of how the geometric division of land impacted eighteenth and nineteenth century attitudes about the American landscape, see David Nye, *America as Second Creation: Technology and Narratives of New Beginnings* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2003), chapter 2, "Surveying the Ground."

[82] Brian Butler runs a website for travelers interested in visiting state boundary intersections called, appropriately, The Corner Corner, a site that "documents, but cannot truly explain" the hobby of visiting places where three or more states or provinces meet at a point. The narrative of the Butlers' visit to the Canadian Four Corners (which was part of an 18-day, 7,700 mile trip with the sole purpose of visiting

In February 1996, computer programmer Alex Jarrett set out from his New Hampshire home in search of the nearest degree confluence – the exact point where 43°N and 72°W intersected – something that would have been exceedingly difficult before consumer GPS technology. His successful visit led to the creation of the Degree Confluence Project, a collaborative effort by a worldwide group of GPS enthusiasts to visit and photograph each of the more than 14,000 land-based intersections of latitude and longitude lines.[83] The collective goal of this loosely-organized group is to provide evidence of having visited each of these intersections, typically including photographs of the surrounding landscape in all four cardinal directions, an image of a GPS screen showing the corresponding location, and usually a detailed narrative of the journey to the confluence.[84]

For example, the narrative describing a visit to 59°N and 95°W in northern Manitoba explains the goal of the Degree Confluence Project while at the same time acknowledging its quixotic nature:

> Even though the cause may seem useless (and in many ways it is!) perhaps it can help make the earth seem smaller with this community of GPS users roaming the back country in search of points on earth, keeping a record of how our diverse world looks like [sic]. So to me, the Degree Confluence Project is about cataloguing the

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twenty-nine such boundary corners) can be found at http://www.bjbsoftware.com/corners/pointdetail.php3?point=139, accessed November 29, 2015.

[83] Timothy Sprinkle, "The Confluence Hunters," *Backpacker*, February 2007, 35. Because the location of these intersections is entirely at the mercy of the mapping grid, degree confluences occur without regard to accessibility, requiring members of the Degree Confluence Project to deal with the limitations of remoteness, terrain, and unsympathetic private property owners. The total number of degree confluences, including those over oceans, is 64,442.

[84] As of late November, 2015, nearly twenty years after the group's founding, participants have visited and photographed almost 6,400 degree confluences. Data from the group's website www.confluence.org, accessed November 21, 2015. The page for the nearest confluence to the University of Texas, about six miles east of the town of Wimberley, for example, consists of a description of the difficulties accessing the site (the confluence falls on a privately-owned ranch) along with nine photographs. Jarrett's own justification for visiting the confluence nearest his New Hampshire home: "What would be there? Would other people have recognized this as a unique spot?"

> earth we live in so that we may know how the landscape looks like from Antarctica to the Arctic.[85]

If anything, taken together the images and narratives demonstrate that most of the earth's surface is devoid of people and that many of the locations where latitude and longitude lines intersect are quite remote.

Even though the Degree Confluence Project is a collective effort, some participants add an aspect of place collecting to confluence hunting. German geodesist Rainer Mautz has, as of February 2016, visited nearly 600 confluences in 103 different countries.[86] Remarkably, Florian Schindler of Germany traveled to the North Pole (2009) *and* South Pole (2011) primarily because of a desire to visit two of the most remote degree confluences. His story of reaching the North Pole on a Russian icebreaker demonstrates how complicated the task actually was, even after the ship essentially reached the location. First, the ship missed the Pole by seventy meters. Then, Schindler explains, "the closer you are to the pole the more the longitude values change rapidly, and thus it is hard to know in which direction to go." Even with a seemingly stable position, the ice is constantly drifting. Schindler repeatedly wandered across the deck of the ship in an attempt to get his GPS to zero out at 90°00.000' because his particular model of GPS did not accept 90°N as a waypoint. Finally after forty-five minutes of maneuvering the ship through the ice, the North Pole was reached – "a very special and unexpected present for me, better than any

[85] This entry was written by visitor Dominic Chartier about a visit that occurred July 8, 2004. Entry can be found at http://confluence.org/confluence.php?lat=59&lon=-95. Consider also the similar sentiment expressed by Tim Cresswell in *Place: A Short Introduction*: "40°46N 73°58W does not mean that much to most people. Some people with a sound knowledge of the globe may be able to tell you what this signifies but to most of us these are just numbers indicating a location – a site without meaning" (2).
[86] Data found at http://confluence.org/visitor.php?id=5887, accessed February 16, 2016.

Christmas present in my whole life!"[87] Clearly, this experience carried an enormous amount of significance for Schindler, who could now say he has visited two of the most remote points on the earth's surface.

Though the military-developed system of satellites that enables the use of GPS receivers has been widely used by civilians since the late 1990s, the participation of American troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan in confluence hunting in a way represents how use of the technology has changed since the mid-1990s. While first used by the military for navigation, GPS receivers became one of the most widely used consumer electronic devices by the early 2000s, primarily for navigation but also leisure activities such as geocaching. The use of GPS devices by military personnel for things like geocaching and confluence hunting while on active duty complicates this trajectory. For example, the confluence of 31°N and 46°E in southern Iraq was visited by a contingent of six active-duty American service personnel while on combat patrol from Tallil Air Force Base in October 2005. Though the location was in an agricultural area and very near a farmhouse, they were the first to visit the site for the explicit purpose of documenting the confluence.[88]

While confluence hunting makes something noteworthy out of otherwise banal locations on the earth's surface, it also more or less treats them as items on a checklist. Retired Air Force pilot Shawn Fleming, who has been to just over 200 confluences, said in a 2012 interview, "We'd often go out in the middle of nowhere and found it's just as

[87] Full narrative available at http://confluence.org/confluence.php?visitid=16370, accessed November 30, 2015.

[88] Full narrative available at http://confluence.org/confluence.php?id=9116, accessed November 28, 2015.

fascinating as, say, the tourists' spots."[89] This statement aligns confluence hunting with other examples of place collecting that tend to make little distinction between the commonly agreed-upon tourist destinations and the banal.

THE QUIXOTIC CASE OF ALAN HOGENAUER

Perhaps the premier example of a place collector is Alan Hogenauer, whose passion for traveling was sparked by a transcontinental rail journey in his teenage years. This trip was followed by a fifty-day bus trip across Europe, after which Hogenauer began to keep track of his trips and categorize the places he visited. He and his wife spent their honeymoon driving a Land Rover across Australia, then from India to Scotland, and he spent his entire adult life pursuing hundreds of lists of self-created travel goals. Certainly on the more extreme end of place collecting, Hogenauer compares well to Elsner and Cardinal's description of the "totalizing collector" or completist. "Such a collector can brook no constraint, can show no hesitation, in the compulsion to possess a complete category in each and every of its variations," they write. "To collect up to a final limit is not simply to own or to control the items one finds; it is to exercise control over existence itself through possessing every sample, every specimen, every instance of an unrepeatable and nowhere duplicated series."[90]

Though a letter to the editor written by Hogenauer complaining about the state of rail travel in the United States appeared in the *New York Times* in 1969, it seems he first came to the attention of journalists in 1977. In that year, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* both ran profiles on Hogenauer, then in his mid-thirties. At that point

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[89] Emily Badger, "In 16,345 Photographs, Capturing the Entire Planet," *Fastcompany.com*, October 2, 2012, http://www.fastcoexist.com/1680620/in-16345-photographs-capturing-the-entire-planet#1.
[90] Elsner and Cardinal, 3.

Hogenauer claimed to have completed almost half of his 127 travel lists, which he explained had given a "special purpose" to his life. These included visiting all 153 U.S. cities with a population higher than 100,000, riding all 238 miles of the New York City subway system, visiting each of the telephone area codes in the U.S., and riding a steam-powered railroad on six continents. Among the lists he was still working on at the time were visits to every province in Kenya, entering each U.S. state at least five times, and traveling by each of the 343 different ways Hogenauer identified (including blimp, bobsled, and snowmobile).[91]

Hogenauer managed to find time to pursue his ambitious travel goals even while earning three advanced degrees in economics and transportation geography from Columbia University, working as a marketing executive for a large airline, as an air transport consultant for five different national governments, and being married with four children. Though he would often bring his family along for some of his journeys, they did not share the same level of enthusiasm. In 1977 Hogenauer's wife Sally remarked, "I don't see him as much as I'd like but at least it's never dull…he's known to call from the office to ask if I'd mind if he flies over to Bahrain for the weekend."[92]

Remarkably, Hogenauer had somewhat strict rules for counting his visits. "There's nothing more frustrating than going somewhere and finding out that something or other's been declared a national monument or something two weeks after you've just been there," he explained in a 1977 interview. For Hogenauer, the designation seemed to matter more

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[91] Joel Kotkin, "Have List, Will Travel: One Man's Compulsion," *Washington Post*, August 24, 1977. At this point, Hogenauer had not yet visited Antarctica. "I'll make it there someday," he said, "Land there and say I've done it." For his letter to the editor, see Alan Hogenauer, "Cross-Country Rail Trip Turns a Positive Passenger Negative," *New York Times*, August 10, 1969.

[92] From Kotkin's *Washington Post* article.

than the visit – having already been to the birthplace of Lyndon Johnson, according to his self-imposed rules he had to make another trip to the site after Johnson was buried nearby because now the site counted as a presidential resting place, which it did not at the time of his initial visit.[93]

By the mid-1990s the number of Hogenauer's travel lists had ballooned to over 300. In 1995 he was officially recognized as being the only person to have visited all 369 U.S. National Park units, a feat that necessitated a ride in a float plane to a crater lake in an extinct volcano in the Aleutian Islands, and an accomplishment for which he was rewarded with a personal visit from National Park Service Director Roger G. Kennedy, who gave him a green canvas bag with the NPS logo emblazoned upon it.[94] Despite a lifelong obsession with tracking his own travels, Hogenauer could not explain exactly why he had so many specific travel goals: "I don't know what it is. I've always been sort of neat and organized. This list thing is just a logical extension of that, a finite expression of it." Suggesting the sense of accomplishment in itself might be a motivating factor, he said, "But when I finish, I know it's worth it. Because I have something people rarely have – a sense of having completed something."[95]

Clearly, the practice of place collecting carries an importance beyond being in the places themselves. Through these intentional acts of mobility, the hierarchy of importance

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[93] From Kotkin. The aspect of timing was also an important factor to Hogenauer, who completed his list of "continent-months," visiting all seven continents at some point during each of the twelve months. See Jennings, 157.

[94] Guy Gugliotta, "A Career Tourist Does National Park Service a Service," *Washington Post*, September 26, 1995. Because the NPS is continually adding new sites to its jurisdiction, Hogenauer kept having to visit new additions to maintain his claim of completion. Ten years after being credited with the first person to visit all 369 NPS sites, the number had risen to 388; by 2013 the number was 401, which Hogenauer managed to visit before his death. Appropriately, the license plate on his car was "ALLOFEM."

[95] From Kotkin's article. Hogenauer continued working toward fulfilling his esoteric travel goals and checking items off his many lists (eventually numbering near 400) right up to his death at the age of 71 in 2013.

given to places is leveled out if not reversed altogether. To the place collector intending to travel to every single country, Albania is just as important as Argentina on the checklist. For someone wanting to visit each of the sites managed by the National Park Service, a few days in Yellowstone National Park counts the same as spending an hour at the estate Martin Van Buren moved into following his presidency—places preserved for entirely different reasons. Particularly with the more extreme examples of place collecting, the expenditure of time, effort, preparation, and money make the activity seem more about completing the items on a list rather than a particular desire to thoroughly experience being in place. Still, these activities hold much significance for their participants. As Hogenauer explained in 1977, "Everything that occurs has to occur in a place. The world is a finite place, and by systematically understanding the components it permits a much easier understanding and a tolerance. I think the world would be a much better place if people could travel more."[96]

Sadly, Alan Hogenauer's online list of travel lists has disappeared since his death in 2013.[97] His personal web page contained hundreds of self-defined travel goals that could be viewed by anyone interested in Hogenauer's progress. Since 2000, there has been an increase in the availability of online mapping websites that enable multiple users to track and compare their past travels. One allows what it calls "clinched highway mapping" in which users enter data on stretches of road they have driven (or perhaps were a passenger) on highway systems in Europe and North America. Another site has similar functions to document past air travel. One website popular with members of the Extra Miler Club (site

[96] Lawrence Van Gelder, "The Traveler With Thousands of Goals," *New York Times*, November 13, 1977.
[97] It is, however, among the 469 billion web pages saved through the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, found at archive.org. The URL of Hogenauer's website was cheklist.com.

founder and administrator Marty O'Brien is a member) is an online map where users click the counties they have visited. This current paradigm in personal online mapping is public, the content is user-generated, and the fact that both Clinched Highway Mapping and the county mapping site arranges user data in hierarchical lists suggests an element of play and competition to these forms of place collecting.[98]

Hogenauer's travel-related goals grew from attempting to pass through as many places as possible to adding other dimensions like visiting each continent in each month or using different modes of transportation in different places and visiting locations depicted on each page of particular atlases. To like-minded travelers, place collecting is means to an end of finishing checklists, perhaps a tacit acknowledgement of the temporary nature of life. Said Hogenauer, "You recognize things in their entirety. If you can say you've got one hundred percent of something in your background, you don't have to worry that you missed out on something."[99]

The internet allows Hogenauer and other travelers to document in virtual space their past presence in physical space. Says Dan Miller in a post to the Extra Miler Club Facebook page, "After my recent trip, it's time to update the travel maps. States, counties, most traveled people, clinched highways, World Heritage sites and of course, crossing things off the travel bucket list."[100] Some of these maps are physical and others are virtual, but people have been doing similar things long before the internet facilitated the documentation of past acts of mobility. The following chapter explores ways people have publicly

[98] Clinched Highway Mapping can be found at cmap.m-plex.com; the air travel website is flightmemory.com. The county mapping website can be found at mob-rule.com/home.
[99] Jennings, 158.
[100] Miller's post is from July 15, 2015. https://www.facebook.com/groups/extramilerclub, accessed July 17, 2015.

demonstrated being in physical space as a way to both declare their presence and to reify their existence.

Chapter 3: Presence and Possession:

Documenting Ephemeral Movements

Well your life is long or your life is short
But every man, he gotta leave his mark
So I got my pencil an' I got my chalk
An' there ain't a rock made I can't make talk, write on…
--Terry Allen, "Writing on Rocks Across the U.S.A."

The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls…
--Simon and Garfunkel, "The Sounds of Silence"

Austin, Texas, is home to the Hope Outdoor Gallery, a terraced foundation near the city's center where anybody can come paint whatever they want. Provided the weather is agreeable, on any given day one is liable to see reknowned graffiti artists painting elaborate pieces, wannabes trying to improve their spraycan skills, locals and tourists alike posing for pictures, and former graffiti writers who have transitioned into creating more "legitimate" artwork hawking their wares. The volume of visitors means that no one work of graffiti has a particularly long lifespan, which is why most who create something here capture the artwork in a photograph before it gets covered by another work.

Aside from the fact that these activities are sanctioned by the property owners, what happens at Hope Outdoor Gallery is not unique. There is an abundance of graffiti in other parts of Austin and, as this chapter will discuss, many other locations throughout human history. The historical and transcultural presence of graffiti demonstrates a deeply human impulse across time and space to leave one's mark. However, the increase of these ephemeral traces of movement and presence over the past several decades expresses a more pronounced desire for longevity and stability in a world characterized by an increasing sense of fluidity and instability. The methods employed to create these traces may have changed over time but the fundamental message is the same: I was here, I exist, and I matter.

This chapter builds upon the previous chapter by focusing on ways people have chosen to demonstrate their existence for others and how new technologies have affected these choices. After all, documenting one's being in place is a common practice extending far beyond place collecting. Here, I explore the ways people have recorded their presence in place by leaving a *trace* – something that remains in place long after the absence of the physical body.

In his conceptual exploration of lines, anthropologist Tim Ingold discusses the trace, the "enduring mark left in or on a solid surface by a continuous movement." These traces can be additive (created by adding substance to an existing surface) or reductive (created by removing surface material). Ingold mentions artist Richard Long's 1967 work, *A line made by walking*, in which Long paced back and forth across a field along the same short path, creating a linear record of his presence.[1] Long's trace, like the others Ingold describes, was created by a mobile human body and left on a static surface (if a field can truly be static). This characterizes most traces, but as this chapter demonstrates, mobile surfaces complicate the meaning of traces as records of being in place.

For those who intentionally visit specific places in a way that constitutes collecting, as discussed in detail in the previous chapter, documenting those visits is extremely important. Despite the fact that the Extra Miler Club does not officially require it, many members choose to take photographs of themselves at county line signs in order to prove their visits. Allegedly, Extra Miler Club cofounder Roy Carson, nearing the completion of

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[1] Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007), 43.

his goal of visiting every single county in the United States, discovered that the photograph he had taken of himself at one county line in Illinois did not develop properly. Soon after discovering he was missing the proof of his visit, he drove from his home in Nevada to central Illinois just to take another photograph. He had already visited the county and completed his quest; only the documentation had been lacking.[2]

This example raises a philosophical question: If there's no record of the event, did it really "happen"? A 2014 *New Yorker* article begins with a story of Aaron Chase, a professional mountain biker, who spent a week riding in Idaho with several helmet-mounded GoPro cameras in order to capture first-person perspective footage for a commercial. Two days into the trip, he was riding down a trail when he encountered a herd of about thirty elk running alongside his route. It was a spectacular encounter but unfortunately for Chase, he had neglected to turn on his camera and the event was never recorded. GoPro founder Nick Woodman developed the idea in 2002 with Brad Schmidt as a way to capture photographs while surfing and since being commercially released in 2004, the company has catered to skiers, skateboarders, and other outdoor enthusiasts. The article compares the GoPro to the Brownie and the Polaroid in that it represents a significant development of photography – one that explicitly invites users to document footage that is intended to be widely shared on social media. "Now the purpose of the trip or trick is the record of it," writes Nick Paumgarten. "Life is footage."[3] As Chase's

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[2] The role of photography for the purposes of documentation seems obvious, but perhaps Susan Sontag has said it best. She writes, "A photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened" and "Photographs will offer indisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the program was carried out, that fun was had." Both quotes from Susan Sontag, "Plato's Cave," in *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 5; 9.

[3] Nick Paumgarten, "We Are a Camera: Experience and Memory in the Age of GoPro," *New Yorker*, September 22, 2014.

encounter with the herd of elk demonstrates, the documentation is as important, perhaps even more important, than the act itself.

Creating Physical Traces of Presence

One common way people have left traces of the self in order to demonstrate their presence is by leaving specific objects. In many cases, this is done to commemorate a significant travel milestone or visiting a remote location. For example, near Watson Lake, Yukon, is a place called the Sign Post Forest. The site dates to the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942, when Private Carl Lindley, ordered to repair a damaged signpost, added his hometown of Danville, Illinois, to the other signs listing the mileage to various destinations along the highway. Travelers have left license plates and personalized signs there for the past seven decades and there are now more than 70,000 signs at the two-acre site.[4]

One of the most common methods of recording one's physical presence is in a logbook. These can be found in places like visitors' centers, chambers of commerce, hotels, museums, and anywhere else frequented by one-time visitors. Generally only consisting of space for visitors to record their names and the dates of their visit, these informal registers are a basic and completely sanctioned way for people to say "I was here." One of the few requirements for physical containers hidden as geocaches is that they must contain a logbook. Upon successfully locating a geocache, finders are to sign or stamp the logbook with their username in order for their visit to officially count, though it is worth mentioning that a geocacher's cumulative "score" is calculated by the number of cache finds that

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[4] From the official home page of the Town of Watson Lake, Yukon, www.watsonlake.ca/our-community/sign-post-forest, accessed March 5, 2016. The website explicitly encourages visitors to participate: "Be a part of this tradition and add a sign of your own! You can bring one or buy a board here and make it yourself at the visitor's center."

person records on the website. Conceivably, a geocacher could log a cache as "found" on the website and increase their number without actually having located the hidden container.

On the summit of Guadalupe Peak, the highest point in Texas, there is a military surplus ammunition box containing a summit register, giving those who complete the four-mile trail an opportunity to record their presence and a short message describing their experience. In California, the Sierra Club places and maintains official summit registers in several western states. When registers are filled, the club donates them to the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, where they are available for research.

Similarly, it is common practice for Appalachian Trail hikers to record their visits in registers placed in shelters along the trail.[5] The journals provide hikers a means of communication that is indirect and mundane: while hikers occasionally reference other hikers whose names they had seen in other trail registers, most of the messages are not directed at anyone in particular. Hikers often sign their entries with pseudonyms, a practice that is believed to have been less common in the 1980s than it is now.[6] The entries largely consist of observations about the weather, the time of arrival at the shelter, and other somewhat superficial things, but occasionally also include poems, drawings, philosophical

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[5] For a brief overview about how these trail registers express hikers' perception of the trail itself, see Roger Sheffer, "The Mental Geography of Appalachian Trail Hikers," in *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination*, ed. Katharine Harmon (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 66-69.

[6] A letter accompanying a donated trail register from Poplar Ridge, Maine, suggests this. The donor (identified only as Dave) writes, "I used only a small notebook that year, and 1983 was during the period when some through hikers saw fit to install their own registers in some shelters, sort of messing up the shelter maintainers' records of traffic for the year." After naming each of the entrants who signed this particular register, Dave mentions, "Interesting that not as many used 'Trail names' in 1983 as is common now." The Appalachian Trail Museum has digitized their collection of shelter registers in addition to keeping some on display. Available at www.atmuseum.org/1983-poplar-ridge-shelter-register-maine.html, accessed March 6, 2016.

musings, and complaints. A typical page, taken from the Full Goose shelter near the Maine-New Hampshire state line reads:

8/1/83 Paul Schmidt "Florida Express" Seminole Fla.
8/1/83 Rick Boudrie   Lunch   south!
8/1/83 Phil Goad, Sanford, Fla. Springer to Springer. ← asshole (added by a later visitor)
8/1/83 March + Vernon Wolf, Media, Pa. Del. Water Gap → ME [the thru hikers]
Enjoying it Danny Boy?
8/1 Great refuge from torrential rains. Thanx. Alright. ADWG, Lox. Mass.
8/3 Indian Brook (camp), farm & wilderness
8 of us spent a comfortable if slightly soggy night here.
No thunder in the notch today, we hope.
Freeze dried o.j. is strange.
North Road → Grafton Notch
--Nomi Hurwitz[7]

As demonstrated by this particular page, each of the entries contain a date and name (or pseudonym), and a few of them include a brief description of the weather or something that may be an inside joke or utter nonsense. The addition of the word *asshole* to a prior entry indicates that hikers will occasionally interact with each other's entries and not all of this interaction is good-natured (though this example could be a playful jab between friends). In response to a sarcastic logbook entry written by a hiker complaining about the poor quality of the spiral notebook serving as a trail register, a hiker named Tazz wrote, "Gee Sid, you sound like a flaming asshole! This register was donated by a fellow hiker, it's all they had in their pack. I think it's better than people writing on the walls."[8]

Hikers who reach the northern end of the Appalachian Trail on the summit of Mount Katahdin in central Maine are greeted by an official sign:

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[7] From www.atmuseum.org/1983-full-goose-shelter-maine.html, accessed March 6, 2016.
[8] This register is from Jenkins Shelter near the town of Bland, Virginia, dated 1983. Available online at www.atmuseum.org/1983-jenkins-shelter-register.html, accessed March 5, 2016.

KATAHDIN
Northern terminus of the
APPALACHIAN TRAIL
A mountain footpath extending over
2000 miles to Springer Mtn, Georgia

The wooden sign needs to be replaced about every decade due in part to the harsh weather conditions at the summit and also because of the intentional decay from hikers recording their presence. Because most through hikers walk the trail from south to north, Mount Katahdin is the finishing line. One such sign, originally placed around 2000 and now on display at the Appalachian Trail Museum in Pine Grove Furnace, Pennsylvania, is missing one of its corners (probably taken as a souvenir) and is inscribed with dozens of marks, initials, and names carved by those who have visited this location. Presumably, one would have needed to complete the trail in order to "earn" the right to make their mark, and these hikers might perhaps be justified in doing so, but there is no way to know for sure. This official sign acts an unofficial logbook even as it has moved from its original location to become part of a museum collection.

WRITING OUT OF PLACE

Logbooks facilitate recording one's visit in ways that are explicitly encouraged. Most of the rest of this chapter, however, will discuss how people have left traces of their presence in ways that are not. Borrowing from Mary Douglas's definition of dirt as matter out of place, graffiti is writing out of place.[9] And because it is out of place, it is unsanctioned. Richard Freeman notices a similarity among catacombs, prison cells, and

[9] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966). See also Susan Strasser, *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000). Rather than consider graffiti's origins to be prehistoric petroglyphs and cave paintings as others have done, my definition of graffiti as unsanctioned writing by ordinary people locates graffiti's origin with organized systems of writing at least 3,500 years ago.

toilets as spaces: "the atmosphere is secret, confining, subterranean, and conspiratorial. They affect human emotions in the same way." In places like these, "a man is likely to assert himself graphically, a silent means of expression. If an unoccupied house stands empty for a long time, it becomes haunted…treated with cautious suspicion." Freeman believes if places such as these are empty, "something must inhabit them…The graffitist responds to this presence."[10] Mapped onto the aspect of forbidden locations is the fact that much graffiti is, in multiple senses of the word, vulgar.

Graffiti provides the transhistorical reader with an insight into the daily life of common (though literate) people, unfiltered by notions of piety and propriety, unfettered by restrictions prescribed by the clergy, nobility, or other authorities. This insight is older than the phalluses, crude limericks, or political opinions one is likely to find in a present-day restroom stall. Riesner records numerous historical examples of graffiti regarding topics such as sexual intercourse and venereal disease, including this epithet from a window in London's Chancery Lane neighborhood, dated 1719: "Here did I lay my Celia down; I got the pox and she got half a crown."[11] For the most part, the graffiti inscribed through the nineteenth century was done so anonymously, suggesting the message was more important than the author.

In discussing the layers of inscriptions found on three medieval Scottish sculptures, Mark Hall writes, "Graffiti expresses the idea that something is important, sufficiently so to be written down. It acts as a testimony of bodily presence in a place; as a memorialization

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[10] Richard Freeman, *Graffiti* (London: Hutchinson, 1966), 129.
[11] Robert Riesner, *Graffiti: Two Thousand Years of Wall Writing* (New York: Cowles, 1971), 3. This book gained Riesner brief access to the late-night talk show circuit in the early 1970s. For other medieval English graffiti, see V. Pritchard, *English Medieval Graffiti* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), and Matthew Champion, *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England's Churches* (London: Ebury Press, 2015).

to an event, a feeling or an idea and, in devotional circumstances, as a ritualized incision of devotion. Holy or sacred objects and spaces can be incised with graffiti about everyday life, thus appropriating that sacredness in support of one's secular life."[12] To Hall, these inscriptions provide the stones with additional meaning beyond their historical function as sacred objects.

One characteristic of graffiti is that its meanings may not immediately be clear to readers. The Sator Square is an ancient example of coded communication. Examples have been found throughout Europe and the Mediterranean including Portugal, France, England, Italy, Sweden, and Syria. The earliest example for which a date can be speculated was found in the ruins of Pompeii, which was buried in volcanic ash from Mount Vesuvius in AD 79.

S	A	T	O	R
A	R	E	P	O
T	E	N	E	T
O	P	E	R	A
R	O	T	A	S

The phrase can be read in any direction, though the exact translation and its meaning have been debated for decades. Because the letters can be rearranged to spell the words *pater noster* (the first two words of the Lord's Prayer) twice with two leftover pairs of A and O (possibly representing the Alpha and Omega), one popular hypothesis is that the Sator

[12] Mark A. Hall, "Three Stones, One Landscape, Many Stories: Cultural Biography and the Early Medieval Sculptures of Inchyra and St Madoed, Carse of Gowrie, Perthshire, Scotland," in *Narrating Objects, Collecting Stories: Essays in Honour of Professor Susan M. Pearce*, ed. Sandra H. Dudley, et al. (London: Routledge, 2012), 97.

Square was a secret way for early Christians to identify their presence to one another without revealing themselves to potentially hostile authorities.[13]

A Sator Square was one of many inscriptions found in the ruins of Pompeii. The volcanic ash that destroyed the city also preserved nearly 15,000 examples of ephemeral writings that didn't survive elsewhere in the Roman Empire. These include lost-and-found articles, announcements of gladiator shows, public notices, and the type of scribblings "which seem[s] to have inflicted the infantile mind at all times and in all places since the beginnings of writing…little nothings of sentiment and opinion."[14] One such inscription reads *Hic ego puellas multa futui*: "Here I have found many girls who make love."[15] The expressions of sexual desire and braggadocio in graffiti are, according to numerous authors writing on the subject, consistent throughout history.

Out of a growing personal interest, sociologist Robert Reisner began compiling bathroom stall writings (formally called *latrinalia*) in the early 1960s. He was partly inspired by an obscure book called *Lexical Evidence From Folk Epigraphy in the English Vocabulary*, written by Allen Walker Read, then a professor at Columbia University. Read justified his intellectual interest by saying, "A sociologist does not refuse to study certain criminals on the ground that they are too dastardly; surely, a student of language is even less warranted in refusing to study certain four-letter words because they are too 'nasty' or too 'dirty.'"[16] Read, apparently inspired by a personal curiosity about the origins of the

[13] Robert Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 1-2. While many of the surviving examples have been found in monasteries and abbeys, strongly suggesting a religious element to the enigmatic square, one work that provides evidence to the contrary is Carlos Perez-Rubin, "The Sunken Ruins of Pompeii and an Age-Old Enigmatic Specimen of Roman Incidental Epigraphy," *Documenta & Instrumenta* 2 (2004): 173-192.
[14] Helen Henrietta Tanzer, *The Common People of Pompeii: A Study of the Graffiti* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1939), 5.
[15] Riesner, 34.
[16] Riesner, x.

word *fuck*, spent his professional life researching the vernacular speech and language habits of ordinary Americans. His first work on the subject, an article published in 1934 called "An Obscenity Symbol," includes a lengthy discussion of the word *fuck*. Never directly putting the forbidden word in print, Read managed to refer to it indirectly as "the colloquial verb and noun, universally known by speakers of English, designating the sex act," among other allusions.[17]

To Read, the inscriptions left by nineteenth century pioneers were as telling as the words written by professional historians. "These voices, for him, have authority—notwithstanding the sneers of English visitors or the arrogance of self-appointed advocates of a linguistic elite," writes Richard Bailey. "Graffiti in the New York subway cars or scrawls in public toilets speak with as much authority as the oratory of politicians or the solemn utterances of heroic figures. The facts are egalitarian; they are everywhere; they are nearly always filled with the spirit of fun."[18] In a similar spirit, Riesner, building upon the word of Read, calls graffiti "revelatory of developments, trends, and attitudes in man's history…little insights, little peepholes into the minds of individuals who are spokesmen not only for themselves but for others like them."[19]

When Riesner was researching bathroom graffiti he visited as many restaurant and coffee shop restrooms in New York City as possible, often using female acquaintances to report on the writings in ladies' rooms, or having them stand guard while he investigated. "When I had no woman to take, I would stand in front of a ladies' room, wait until someone

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[17] Allen Walker Read, "An Obscenity Symbol," *American Speech* 9, no. 4 (December 1934), 267. This article appears in a collection of Read's work, called *Milestones in the History of English in America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002). Riesner calls Read's oeuvre "pioneer work" (xi).
[18] Richard W. Bailey, "Allen Walker Read, American Scholar," *A Review of General Semantics* 61, no. 4 (December 2004), 435.
[19] Riesner, 1.

emerged, and ask her if there was anyone in there. If there was not, I would ask her to please play sentry and guard the door while I scanned the walls. If ladies so accosted seemed a little skeptical or wary of my intentions, I swept away their doubts by telling them I was working on a doctorate in scatology or that I was doing a thesis on feces."[20]

The wall markings examined by Riesner and others in the middle of the twentieth century generally fall into the same two categories of content that have been present in graffiti for millennia. The first consists of anonymous limericks, drawings, witty phrases, slogans, and wordplay. This category is historically the most common, particularly after the increase of literacy in the sixteenth century. The second consists of names and initials written as a way to record one's presence in space and time, a way to definitively claim *I was here*. This second form, which was rather far less common until comparatively recently, increased dramatically right around the time Riesner was writing his book, and is probably what first comes to mind upon hearing the word *graffiti*.

An example that doesn't fit neatly into either category is Kilroy, the large-nosed figure accompanied by the phrase "Kilroy was here." For many years, nobody definitively knew his origin other than that it dated to World War II. Riesner, writing barely two decades after the war's conclusion, suggests it may have been a disgruntled infantry sergeant fed up with the Air Transport Command: "When the A.T.C. hastened to some farflung, hazardous part of the globe to set up a new base, they found the bold announcement that Kilroy had got there first."[21] Contrary to Reisner's unsubstantiated

[20] Riesner, xi. Riesner taught a course about graffiti in the Department of Anthropology at the New School for Social Research in New York in the late 1960s. In the course, students completed projects examining desk graffiti in schools, comparing the types of inscriptions present in two different neighborhoods, and graffiti written during times of political turmoil, among others.
[21] Riesner, 13.

claim, the mark almost certainly originates with James J. Kilroy, an inspector at the Fore River shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts, who began drawing his mark on ships to prove to his supervisors he was working. Through the course of the war, the drawing of Kilroy became more and more about the presence of American service personnel than the original artist, functioning as a morale-boosting symbol.[22] Even after the war's conclusion, Kilroy appeared in some unusual places: on the side of the battleship New York after the nuclear test at Bikini Atoll in 1948, on the top of the Statue of Liberty's torch, under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, at the topmost part of the George Washington Bridge in Upper Manhattan, and written on the giant crates carrying three elephants sent to the United States by the Belgian Government in the 1950s.[23]

While the frequent presence of Kilroy stood in as a proxy for service personnel, the federal government developed a technology that would have a profound impact on the ways people would mark space. Between 1940 and 1943 Lyle Goodhue and William Sullivan, researchers as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, filed numerous aerosol patents. Among them was one for a "small aerosol can pressurized by a liquefied gas." The pair patented an "aerosol dispensing apparatus," the first practical application for a fine spray from a nozzle mounted on a small canister.[24] The Westinghouse Company, working in partnership with Goodhue and Sullivan, developed what would later be known as a "bug bomb" or

[22] Roger Gastman and Caleb Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti* (New York: Harper Design, 2010), 41. While Kilroy's drawings (and duplications of his drawing) were found throughout the world during and after the war, James J. Kilroy himself never ventured more than a couple hundred miles from his native Boston.
[23] Riesner, 14. According to Riesner, there is an anecdote claiming Stalin emerged from one of the opulent marble bathrooms at Potsdam in 1945, asking one of his aides, "Who is Kilroy?" Appropriately, Kilroy makes an appearance on the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, completed in 2004.
[24] Goodhue and Sullivan were preceded by Norwegian engineer Erik Rotheim, who was granted a patent in 1931 for an aerosol and valve combination that could dispense product with a propellant. Goodhue, who would come to be known as the "Father of the Aerosol Industry," independently developed the idea around the same time as Rotheim while working as a research chemist for DuPont.

"aerosol bomb." During World War II, the United States government was interested in a personally portable solution to eradicate malaria-carrying mosquitos, especially after the disease had directly contributed to the defeat of American forces in the Philippines. More than forty million of the one-pound cylinders were shipped to troops in the Pacific to spray inside tents and airplanes.[25]

By 1947, civilian consumers were able to purchase insecticides in spray cans. In 1949, Bronx machine shop owner Robert Abplanalp invented a springloaded crimp-on valve that enabled liquids to be sprayed from a can under the pressure of an inert gas. The lightweight aluminum valve was used in cans to dispense foams, powders, and creams, and by the 1960s Abplanalp's Precision Valve Corporation was producing more than one billion valves annually. The same year Abplanalp invented his spray nozzle, Illinois paint company owner Ed Seymour, at the suggestion of his wife, mixed paint and aerosol in a can with a spray nozzle in order to better demonstrate the capabilities of his company's product to coat automobile radiators. In doing so, Seymour is acknowledged as being the first to develop a spray can specifically for paint. Illinois Bronze, Krylon, Rust-Oleum, and many others began producing paint in spray cans in the late 1940s and early 1950s and by 1973 the U.S. spray paint industry was producing 270 million cans annually.[26]

POSTMODERN GRAFFITI AND ANONYMOUS FAME

A new development was taking place just as Riesner was publishing his books on bathroom graffiti at the end of the 1960s. The widespread strikes and unrest in Paris in May

[25] Alfred H. Sinks, "Bug Bombardier," *Coronet Magazine*, March 1946, 114-116.
[26] Hilary Greenbaum and Dana Rubinstein, "The Origin of Spray Paint," *New York Times Magazine*, November 4, 2011. The number had jumped to 412 million cans annually by 2010.

of 1968 sparked the appearance of numerous messages on walls throughout the city.[27] Whereas many of the slogans appearing in Paris relied on absurdity or wordplay to convey political messages, a different kind of graffiti was taking shape in the urban centers of Washington, Philadelphia, and New York. Rather than containing anonymous, overt political messages or public declarations of love that had been common since Pompeii, rather than claim space as street gangs had done for decades, this new wave of graffiti was entirely concerned with writing one's name as a way of declaring one's presence: I was here. In this new formulation the identities of the creators were obscured and required interpretation rather than the messages themselves.

New York City was facing severe financial and social difficulties in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Decades of suburbanization had drained parts of the city of a significant tax base. Freeway construction bisected and isolated once-thriving neighborhoods, sending them into a spiral of decay. A heroin epidemic was blamed for a dramatic increase in muggings and car theft. Burned-out sections of South Bronx were described as war zones, symbols of a crumbling infrastructure and declining quality of life in many parts of the city.[28] It is from these conditions that working-class youth, many of whom were African-American and Nuyorican, began writing their names on surfaces throughout the city.

New York City is widely regarded as being its birthplace but the type of name-based writing characterizing most graffiti from the past several decades actually originated in Philadelphia in 1967 when young African-American males calling themselves

[27] Some of these can be found in Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). See also Riesner, 140-142.

[28] For some insight about the effects Robert Moses's modernist vision had on the South Bronx in particular, see Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), especially section V, "In the Forest of Symbols: Some Notes on Modernism in New York."

Cornbread, Cool Earl, and Kool Klepto Kidd started writing or spraying their names on walls. Says Kool Klepto Kidd, “We were just on the subway writing on the advertisements. Wherever there was a little space in there, we would write our names. It was almost like, ‘We were here,’ like it was our route.”[29] Before long, the names of these youths could be found on walls throughout the city.

Sociologist Herbert Kohl discusses the nicknames children acquire and adopt in order to take on other personalities and identities. “We all have public identities, and behave in different ways with different groups of people. We have business cards, pins, secret handshakes, badges, etc. In the cases of youngsters from poor neighborhoods, they use the walls that surround them to document and to make public several of their identities.”[30] The very earliest New York practitioners (hereafter referred to as “writers” to be consistent with the common nomenclature) such as Julio 204 and Taki 183 paired their names with their streets, making them somewhat easier to identify; later writers went with pseudonyms like Stitch-I, Phase II and Soul Train. Because what these writers were doing was illegal, staying anonymous to authorities was as important as gaining fame among one’s peers. As Ivor Miller writes, “Multiple naming is useful to those living outside the law to maintain boundaries between their official identities and unofficial activities.”[31] For some, the name selection process took some time. New York writer Zephyr, who has been active since the late 1970s, discusses the process in selecting his name:

> First I was Frodo [from *The Hobbit*]. Then I was Sky, but then older writers like Steve 161 would tell me, ‘You can’t be Sky, I know the real Sky.’ Other writers

[29] Gastman and Neelon, 50. Cornbread allegedly sprayed his name on a tour jet belonging to the Jackson 5 and an elephant in the Philadelphia Zoo.
[30] Herbert Kohl and James Hinton, “Names, Graffiti, and Culture,” *Urban Review* 3, no. 5 (April 1969). In Riesner, 86.
[31] Ivor Miller, *Aerosol Kingdom: Subway Painters of New York* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 55.

> told me I was disrespecting another writer by writing his name. And I was like, 'Well, what can I be?' Then I wrote Trek, from *Star Trek*."[32]

After that phase was over, he settled on Zephyr, figuring the name wouldn't be confused for anyone else's.

Taki 183 was prolific enough to be the subject of a 1971 *New York Times* story about him, revealing him to be a Greek-American kid named Demetrius who lived on 183rd street and was unaffiliated with any street gang, contradicting popular perceptions of graffiti writers (that were common then and that continue to persist). He started by writing "Taki 183" on ice cream trucks during the summer of 1970 as they passed through his neighborhood, but it wasn't until he started working as a messenger and wrote his nickname all over the city that the name became well known outside of Washington Heights. "I don't feel like a celebrity normally," said Taki, "But the guys make me feel like one when they introduce me to someone. 'This is him,' they say."[33] They may not have known the person but they were already familiar with the name.

The irony is that Taki, like many other graffiti writers, were simultaneously well-known and anonymous. (In an essay appearing in a book of Jon Naar's photographs of early 1970s New York graffiti, Norman Mailer, in typical hyperbole, compared Taki 183's fame to that of Giotto in the workshops of the Italian Renaissance.[34]) Graffiti historian Roger Gastman writes about the encounter between the two main camps of Philadelphia graffiti writers, active in the city's north and west sides, that occurred in 1969 at a social function at the Shanahan Ballroom in West Philadelphia:

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[32] Miller, 65.
[33] Don Hogan Charles, "Taki 183 Spawns Pen Pals," *New York Times*, July 21, 1971.
[34] Norman Mailer, "The Faith of Graffiti," in Mervyn Kurlansky, *The Faith of Graffiti* (New York: Praeger, 1974), 1.

> I noticed Cool Earl because he had 'cool' on the back of his cap, Cornbread explains. I said, 'Are you Cool Earl? I'm Cornbread.' He didn't believe me until I pulled out my marker. Then he started calling his friends over. 'Chewy! There goes Cornbread!' We recognized each other by reputation only, but we were hugging each other.

Kool Klepto Kidd says, "When Earl, Chewy, Cold Duck, and myself met Cornbread, Tity, and Dr. Cool No. 1, that was really a beautiful feeling because we had been tracking each other for the longest time."[35]

Mobile Messages

Taki 183 was not the first working class teenager in New York to write his nickname onto a public surface as a way of declaring his presence. Members of the Tomahawks, Savage Nomads, Brooklyn Chaplains, and numerous other street gangs had being doing it since the 1950s. Why Taki is noteworthy is that he wrote his name beyond his own neighborhood. "What set Taki apart was that he wrote not only near home but also smack in Midtown Manhattan," writes Gastman, "He was not trying to announce his presence to claim his neighborhood turf; he just wrote where everyone—including the movers and shakers of society—would see it."[36] Working as a courier gave him the opportunity to venture around the Upper East Side and Gramercy Park neighborhoods. On weekends he would write his name in intersections too busy to hit during weekdays. Sometimes he would ride the train all the way from Upper Manhattan to Coney Island for no other purpose but to leave his name on subway cars and stations in between.

Graffiti writers in New York (and to a lesser extent Philadelphia) quickly realized that the easiest way to claim space was to write their names on mobile subway cars. The

[35] Gastman and Neelon, 51.
[36] Ibid, 57.

deteriorating subway system was one of the most visible symbols of New York's decline – by the 1970s, the subways had acquired a reputation for attracting crime and the system had seen its ridership decline to 1910s levels. Deferred maintenance meant that tracks were frequently out of service, trains were often late, and by 1980 the system was found to be one-tenth as reliable as twenty years before.[37] As Martha Cooper and Henry Chalfant write in their pictorial book of New York's "golden age" of subway graffiti, "Kids impressed by the public notoriety of a name appearing all over the city realized that the pride they felt in seeing their name up in the neighborhood could expand a hundredfold if it traveled beyond the narrow confines of the block."[38] The subway was more than a transportation network; it became a communications network. "The New York subway system would morph into this message-in-a-bottle kind of medium," writes Sacha Jenkins.[39] One could write one's name on a subway car knowing it would travel all up and down the line until it was reassigned to another line and then travel to other parts of the city. Subway cars were preferred over buses simply because they went farther. The graffiti on the sides of subway cars increased in sophistication, complexity, and frequency by the middle of the 1970s, but for this wave of graffiti practitioners "their simplistic writing were more about saying, 'hello, I was here,' than about making artistic statements or crafting breakthrough painting techniques."[40]

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[37] Mark S. Feinman has written a comprehensive history of the decline and mismanagement of New York City's subway system in the 1960s and 1970s, available at www.nycsubway.org, accessed March 8, 2016.

[38] Martha Cooper and Henry Chalfant, *Subway Art* (New York: Henry Holt, 1984), 14. This book, along with the PBS documentary *Style Wars* from the same year, are widely credited as being two of the most influential texts in spreading New York's graffiti culture to cities across the United States and to much of the rest of the world.

[39] Sacha Jenkins, "In a War Zone Wide-Awake: Jon Naar in New York, c. 1973," in Jon Naar, *The Birth of Graffiti* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2007), 12.

[40] Sacha Jenkins, "The Writing on the Wall: Graffiti Culture Crumbles into the Violence it Once Escaped," in *And it Don't Stop: The Best American Hip-hop Journalism of the Last 25 Years*, ed. Raquel Cepeda (New York: Faber and Faber, 2004), 290. These developments in painting techniques are well-documented

Comparing the unsanctioned use of spray paint by New York graffiti writers in the 1970s to the ways punks used the safety pin in the same decade as a symbol of resistance and bricolage, Greenbaum and Rubinstein write, “Spray paint…was the ideal medium for this form of branding. It came in small, easy-to-conceal, easy-to-steal cans. It was paint and brush in one. It dried quickly. It worked well on building materials and subway cars.” Another aspect that may have made this medium alluring is that its “imprecise application lent it an inherent disregard. Its inability to be perfectly controlled also made it an apt metaphor for rebellion.”[41]

Graffiti spread exponentially throughout the entire city in 1971. “We started going to Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and we wouldn’t see any,” recalls Jag, one of Taki’s acquaintances from Washington Heights. “We would put our names up there and come back six months later and you’d see a hundred different names there.”[42] The increase in names meant more competition for space on subway cars and city streets and as early as spring 1972 there were calls to address the explosion of graffiti in New York. City council member Sanford Garelik told reporters, “Graffiti pollutes the eye and mind and may be one of the worst forms of pollution we have to combat.” He called upon citizens to “wage war on graffiti” and to organize a monthly cleanup day in partnership with the newly-formed Environmental Protection Agency. The *New York Times* proposed banning the sale of spray paint to minors. Mayor John Lindsay, working with the city council, drafted a law making

elsewhere. See Cooper and Chalfant, *Subway Art*, and Eric Felisbret, *Graffiti New York* (New York: Abrams, 2009). See also Naar, *The Birth of Graffiti*.

[41] From the Greenbaum and Rubinstein *New York Times Magazine* article. It is worth mentioning that aside from spray paint, even more graffiti writers used commercially-available and homemade markers to write their names.

[42] Gastman and Neelon, 62.

it illegal to carry an aerosol paint can in public and formed an anti-graffiti task force.[43] The MTA's graffiti removal costs more than doubled each year in the early 1970s, rising from $300,000 in 1970 to $2.7 million in 1973.[44]

To combat the epidemic, in the late 1970s New York's MTA started using a new chemical bath designed especially to remove graffiti from the outside of subway cars. Requiring fifty-five gallons of solvent to clean a single subway car, the method did not work as well on older steel cars as on the newer aluminum ones, and often resulted in only a partial erasure. Increased surveillance and efforts to combat subway graffiti throughout the 1980s led writers to abandon their efforts or target the streets again with other media such as stickers and wheat-pastes. The MTA declared the subway system "graffiti free" in May 1989, ending a 17-year battle in the city's war on graffiti that lasted through the mayoral tenures of John Lindsay and Ed Koch.

In Los Angeles, things developed in much the same way. Like the Headhunters and Savage Nomads marking their presence in New York in the 1950s, street gangs had marked their territory since at least the 1940s. These *placas* had a distinct trapezoidal style, evoking the shape of Mayan pyramids. Although they were painted to demarcate the gang's turf, they often included a "roll call"—a list of each member's nickname alongside the gang's name.[45] As Gusmano Cesaretti, who published an early book on the subject, explains, the social and economic conditions that prompted working class teenagers in Philadelphia and New York to start writing their names were similar to those experienced by Mexican-

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43 Craig Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1982), chapter 7, "The Politics of Graffiti."

44 Ibid, 149.

45 See Gusmano Cesaretti, *Street Writers: A Guided Tour of Chicano Graffiti* (Los Angeles: Acrobat Books, 1975). See also Susan A. Phillips, *Wallbangin': Graffiti and Gangs in L.A.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), and Steve Grody, *Graffiti L.A.: Street Styles and Art* (New York: Abrams, 2006), 12.

American youths in Los Angeles. To Cesaretti, working-class Chicano youths grow up surrounded by many physical and metaphorical walls. Rather than respond with apathy or violence, these youths can "perform a kind of ritual magic to neutralize the force of the walls by decorating them with signs, symbols and art."[46] This form of graffiti was a collective effort and the individual, name-based graffiti that developed in Philadelphia and New York in the late 1960s did not exist in Los Angeles until the early 1980s. When it arrived, it was intertwined with the nascent hip-hop culture that had developed in New York alongside graffiti in the late 1970s.

Los Angeles did not yet have a subway system but graffiti writers there, like their counterparts in New York and Philadelphia, similarly recognized the value of putting their name on something mobile. Starting in 1986, "bus mobbing" became popular as large numbers of marker-wielding teenagers overwhelmed buses as they stopped for layovers at particular intersections. "Kids would come from all over to the bus bench at Fairfax and Olympic," says Wisk. "There would be hundreds of kids there—as many hands as could fit on one bus. Ten people on the grill, twenty or thirty on the driver's side, ten on the back."[47] In an interview for a book on Los Angeles graffiti in the 1980s, Test describes the bus mobbing days:

> Fridays at the Bench were legendary. Pure pandemonium, 30 to 50 writers killing buses, signing each other's piece books, selling supplies and exchanging pics. [In downtown] the buses ran like water, lines you never even seen before. They would stop four and five at a time. Driver sides, billboards, top-to-bottoms, roof tops, and destination signs, anything was possible in downtown. The Century layover was

[46] Cesaretti, 1-2.

[47] Gastman and Neelon, 218. Wisk was known for numbering each piece of graffiti he created, the number eventually reaching well into the thousands.

> heaven. The drivers would go across the street to the Bob's Big Boy in the mall to grab a bite to eat and you had at least 15-20 minutes to do whatever you wanted.[48]

This phase of graffiti was short-lived, tapering off by 1989 as the RTD began to aggressively employ the same anti-graffiti techniques that New York's MTA used to combat subway graffiti.

The same fixation on writing names on transit vehicles developed in San Francisco around the same time. After identifying some of the more extreme measures taken by graffiti writers to vandalize buses, San Francisco MUNI Deputy Chief of Staff Anthony Tufa says, "they'd tag the number fourteen bus when it was at the top of the hill in Daly City, and that bus comes all the way down Mission through two or three areas before it gets to the Ferry Building. So if they get up on that bus their work will be seen by lots of people. They use our buses also like a newspaper to get messages or the word out to their rival crews or gangs."[49]

Starting in the mid-1980s, a few years before New York's MTA declared victory in the war on subway graffiti, a number of writers began focusing their attention on freight trains, which were larger and traveled much further than Brooklyn or the Bronx. "We saw it as getting up and, of course, having fun," explains Ket, who was also painting subway cars in the 1980s. "We always knew the trains were going somewhere, but we never thought of other writers actually seeing them."[50] Zephyr quit painting subways in 1985, then started painting freight trains after a seven year hiatus. He explains, "The New York subway system was small enough that you could paint on a train, see that train, ride that

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[48] Robert Alva and Robert Reiling, *The History of Los Angeles Graffiti Art Volume I: 1983-1988* (Los Angeles: Alva & Reiling Publications, 2005), 421.
[49] Michael Walsh, *Graffito* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1996), 112.
[50] Gastman and Neelon, 265.

train, and then see it pass you two weeks later. Every time I paint a freight, I feel like I'm throwing a message into a very large ocean, and somebody may or may not receive it."[51]

Before long they were a popular target in cities that already had established graffiti subcultures such as Chicago and Los Angeles. As painting trains grew in popularity in the 1990s, fledgling graffiti writers in cities and towns that did not have their own scenes recognized their potential. As G-South, from comparatively isolated southeastern Florida, explains, "The freights took care of that by taking our crews' names from Boston to Kansas City to Seattle and back again without us leaving the state."[52]

MONIKERS

Before graffiti writers started putting their names on freight cars in the 1980s and before youths in New York were doing the same thing on subway cars in the late 1960s and early 1970s, others were using the nation's system of railroads as a communications network of their own. Freight train monikers, dating from the second half of the nineteenth century, were one way mobile (some would call them transient), unemployed (either by choice or by circumstance) men chose to record their presence.[53] In *The Road*, an autobiographical account of riding the rails in the 1890s, Jack London writes of *monicas*, the "nom-de-rails that hoboes assume or accept when thrust upon them by their fellows." London was crossing Canada by train in order to find work out west when he kept seeing the mark of Skysail Jack:

> I first ran into it at Montreal. Carved with a jack-knife was the skysail-yard of a ship. It was perfectly executed. Under it was 'Skysail Jack.' Above was 'B.W. 10-15-94.' This latter conveyed the information that he had passed through Montreal bound west, on October 15, 1894. He had one day the start of me. 'Sailor Jack' was

[51] Roger Gastman, Darin Rowland, and Ian Sattler, *Freight Train Graffiti* (New York: Abrams, 2006), 116.
[52] Gastman and Neelon, 268.
[53] For a comprehensive history of the politics of mobility and vagrancy involving migrant working men between 1869 and 1940, see Tim Cresswell, *The Tramp in America* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).

> my monica at the time, and promptly I carved it alongside of his, along with the date and the information that I, too, was bound west.[54]

London, assuming the identity of Sailor Jack, kept up on the whereabouts of Skysail Jack by carving messages into railroad water tanks (London calls them "tramp directories") as they each crossed Canada independently, aware of each other's presence through the traces they left.

Hobos created their own visual language, possibly adapted from Civil War battlefield codes, indicating safe houses, dangerous places, where to get a handout, and so on.[55] Illicitly riding trains required long periods of waiting to "catch out" so many hobos passed the time by carving their initials and nicknames (and sometimes their city of origin) into wooden boxcars and trackside equipment sheds. After the Depression, railroad companies transitioned from wood to steel and steam to diesel, and the method changed from carving and etching to marking with chalk and paint stick. Even with the relatively less permanent methods of inscribing compared to carving, the markings could last several decades and travel many thousands of miles.

The number of hobos marking trains dropped when the economy improved during and after World War II but the tradition continued with bored railroad workers. *J.B. King, esq.* was one of the first recognizable names written on the sides of boxcars, written by multiple railroad workers as an inside joke similar to the *Kilroy Was Here* inscriptions that date from around the same time. Gastman suggests J.B. King, esq. may have been a

[54] Jack London, "Hoboes That Pass in the Night," in *The Road*, Subterranean Lives series, introduction by Todd DePastino (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 99. Originally published 1907.
[55] Civil War soldiers were known to leave graffiti of their own as they passed through empty houses, churches, and caves. See Kim O'Connell, "Graffiti and the Civil War," *New York Times*, July 25, 2014.

competition between railroad workers to see who could complete the signature in a single line, without lifting the marker.[56]

Another once-common moniker dating from the 1930s is a simple drawing of an oval face wearing a ten-gallon hat and smoking a pipe paired with the name *Bozo Texino*. Five decades later, filmmaker and photographer Bill Daniel attempted to identify the man responsible for the Bozo Texino moniker. This search, which took nearly twenty years, involved gathering notes and ephemera, documenting hobo culture by filming and interviewing hobos, and riding the rails upon occasion. "I was immediately consumed by the desire to photograph these weird drawings and to find out who was doing them," explains Daniel. "Making a film about the subject became more about participation in the lore than making an actual documentary about it."[57]

After a 1992 article in the *Houston Chronicle*, Daniel began receiving letters from others who thought they knew Texino's identity and whereabouts. Texino was an almost mythological figure – according to those who claimed to know, he was a migrant worker from Texas, he was a conductor on the Sunset Limited, he was a switchman in one of the Houston railyards, or he was dead and someone else had been drawing the figure for years. As it turns out, a combination of those rumors was true. Daniel located a 1939 issue of *Railroad Stories* magazine, a monthly periodical written for railroad workers, identifying the original Bozo Texino as J.H. McKinley, an engineer for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, who drew the figure from around 1910 through the 1940s. But complicating Daniel's search for the true identity of Bozo Texino was the fact that, like Kilroy forty years earlier,

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[56] Gastman, et al., 286.

[57] Gastman and Neelon, 35. Daniel's search, and much of the footage he had captured along the way, was released as a documentary film titled *Who is Bozo Texino? The Secret History of Hobo Graffiti*, directed by Bill Daniel (2005; Houston: Bill Daniel Studios, 2007), DVD.

multiple people had been drawing the same figure on the sides of railroad cars. A railroad worker in Houston calling himself Grandpa Bozo Texino saw the original monikers in the 1920s and began duplicating them. Grandpa drew the figures on railroad cars (and during his tours of duty in the 1940s, military equipment in Hawaii and Japan) for more than sixty years, far outpacing his original inspirer.

Daniel had already discovered the identity of Herby, a retired railroad employee named Herbert Meyer, known for drawing a figure wearing a sombrero and poncho seated at the base of a palm tree on the sides of thousands of boxcars. Meyer had been working as a switchman since the mid-1930s and claimed to be inspired to create his own mark after seeing Bozo Texino's but did not start drawing his own figure until after quitting smoking in 1957. Every time he felt the urge to light a cigarette, he's draw a Herby on a railroad car. "Cotton Belt trains would pile up on the mainline, the yard would be plugged, and it's a 4-track mainline, I would just go wild," said Meyer in a 1991 interview. "You know it's like a drug to me. I would just go up and down both sides."[58] Meyer continued to draw Herby on railroad cars even after he retired from the Missouri Pacific in the 1980s. "They figured I drew 700,000," explains Meyer. "Now you know that couldn't be. Many times the carmen would be making up a train for us and I would go around a hundred twenty-five, thirty cars. Now that's double, both sides. But I didn't do it on tank cars or old dirty boxcars. It had to be where it could be seen."[59]

In the early 1970s, just as working class youth in New York and Philadelphia began marking their names on subway cars, railroad workers calling themselves Water Bed Lou, The Rambler of Beaumont, Kid Idaho, Smokin' Joe, and hundreds of others across the U.S.

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[58] Bill Daniel, *Mostly True* (Portland: Microcosm Publishing, 2012), 38.
[59] Daniel, 39.

began developing and drawing monikers with a greater frequency than ever before. A man calling himself Colossus of Roads began writing his moniker in November 1971. "Initially, I was inspired by the mystery of the origin of the practitioners of the folk art tradition of chalk scrawls on uniform cars," he explains, "and the human hand acknowledging the transitory nature of our existence on a railcar just passing through."[60] Other railroad workers continued this form of visual expression in the 1980s and 90s.

The Solo Artist is a figure who connects graffiti writing and railroad monikers. After a year of writing graffiti in New York in the late 1970s, he moved to the Dallas area with his family. Remembering there was a freight yard in Queens, "It clicked that freights could be my long-distance connection to the city and culture I loved and missed." He often saw sketches by moniker writers such as Herby, Colossus of Roads, and Water Bed Lou, and between 1989 and 1993 gradually transitioned from writing "Solo" with spraypaint to drawing the profile of a face called "The Solo Artist" with a paint stick.[61] The mid-1990s saw a resurgence in monikers both because some writers like The Solo Artist grew bored with aerosol graffiti, and also due to an increase in the number of freight riders who, unlike the hobos in Jack London's day, were likely to be twenty-something anarchist punks looking more for adventure than employment.[62]

Many of the older monikers from the 1960s, 70s, and 1980s fell victim to the exponential growth in aerosol graffiti on freight trains in the 1990s. Says Colossus of

[60] Gastman and Neelon, 37. Colossus of Roads specifically cites Herby, Bozo Texino, and Kurt Vonnegut protagonist Kilgore Trout as influences. Notably, J.H. McKinley (the original Bozo Texino), Herby, and Colossus of Roads all worked for the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

[61] Gastman and Neelon, 265.

[62] Some, like Barry McGee and Margaret Kilgallen, were able to exist simultaneously in multiple art scenes during this time. McGee, who wrote graffiti as Twist throughout the 1990s, assumed a moniker nickname of Bernon Vernon. Kilgallen, known as Meta on the streets, drew a moniker named Matokie Slaughter. Their respective work can be seen in the documentary film *Beautiful Losers*, directed by Aaron Rose (2008; New York: Oscilloscope Pictures, 2009), DVD.

Roads, "My own outlet of expression telegraphing my discontent and alienation was being wiped out and covered. My history, written in brief synoptic prompts, was being erased. The less obtrusive chalk and painstik [sic] writers, which didn't overwhelm or detract from the general aesthetics of the rail car, were being supplanted by jarring intrusions of spray…"[63] There was, and continues to be, a general sense of camaraderie among moniker writers, perhaps because they face the common threat of being disregarded by aerosol graffiti writers unaware of, or uninterested in, the long-established tradition of train monikers.

As ephemeral drawings recorded in paint stick, freight train monikers are subject to fading and decay. Some contemporary moniker writers, upon finding a faded Herby or Bozo Texino, will restore the moniker, quite literally tracing a simulacrum over the original trace of movement. "Sometimes it's been restored three times and it's faded out again, so you come back a fourth time," says photographer Toby Hardman. "When I do it, I get really careful, stand back and see everything, really scan it out and see where the real line is, and get really careful about redoing it."[64] On these mobile palimpsests, the "real line" sometimes becomes indistinguishable from its replacements.

Contrasting moniker writing against the self-awareness and commercial entanglements of postmodern art, Bill Daniel claims the practice is "organic, unchanged, and pure of intent."[65] What he does not elaborate on, however, is that this intent and meaning change depending on the artist and time period. In its earliest form, monikers served as a means of identification and communication between hobos. Then by the 1930s

[63] Gastman, et al., 305.
[64] Ibid, 307.
[65] Daniel, 5.

they had been adopted by bored (or passively resistant) railroad workers as well, perhaps unaware of their original meaning. For railroad workers in the 1970s and 1980s, it was something of an inside joke referencing an earlier generation of their counterparts. Many who continued the tradition after the 1990s came into it by way of aerosol graffiti, likely after repeatedly encountering the monikers as they were painting trains. The simplicity of writing monikers can be interpreted as an act of resistance against the increasingly sophisticated and complex graffiti found on freight cars starting in the 1990s, or a nostalgic recognition that the tradition predates aerosol.[66]

For some, moniker writing stems from a fascination with the movement of freight trains. "I have a genuine interest in the railroad and the travel and the circulation," says Faves. "When I put a streak on a boxcar, it's gone. It intrigues me to know that it's going to travel for many years and many miles, and on any given day I have several thousand streaks running."[67] Says the Rambler of Beaumont, "A lot of them guys would go on vacation and they'd say, 'Man, I seen one of your damn drawings in Canada or Mexico or California.' I thought, 'Well, I'll never go there, I might as well send somethin.'"[68] For others, the practice is a way to simultaneously reify one's existence and gain notoriety, much like the subway graffiti writers in New York in the 1970s and 1980s. As Colossus of Roads suggests, "That was the whole appeal of the concept: to be well known yet anonymous."[69]

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66 Being the definitive text on the subject, Gastman, et al., *Freight Train Graffiti* shows how quickly the art developed in the 1990s.

67 Gastman, et al., 303.

68 Daniel, 121.

69 Gastman, et al., 293. This echoes the sentiment on a T-shirt available from Colossus: "seen yet not known."

Others seem to take as much pleasure in self-indulgent record-keeping as in creating large quantities. Since he began in 1971, Colossus of Roads has kept extensive records of how many drawings he makes each day along with that day's chosen phrase that accompanies his pipe-smoking figure. Meyer included the date with each Herby he drew, adding newer dates to any older Herby he happened to encounter. In 1980 Grandpa Bozo Texino began to keep a record of the number of monikers he drew each day, and in that first year had marked more than thirty thousand freight cars. Because he only counted trains in his tally that had been marked on both sides, the total number of drawings he made in 1980 alone exceeds sixty thousand. "What made you draw so many Bozo Texinos?" asks Bill Daniel in the culmination of his documentary. "I got a pleasure out of puttin' [it] on there and I hoped people got a pleasure out of seein' it go by," explains Grandpa. "To me the picture and the name has no earthly meaning. It was just a kind of picture, like I said, one I enjoyed and I hoped other people enjoyed. It has no meaning whatsoever. It means nothing."[70]

Grandpa Bozo Texino's evasiveness masks something deeper about writing monikers. Perhaps the drawing itself has no literal meaning (or because it is vague, has no *single* literal meaning), but the act of creating the drawing is saturated with meaning. Hobos from Jack London's day through the Depression left messages recording their presences and warned other hobos of danger. Railroad workers through most of the twentieth century drew them either as a tribute to earlier hobos or to each other, and late twentieth-century graffiti writers drew monikers as a way to connect themselves to an older tradition. Each moniker has a multiplicity of messages embedded within: this is my mark, I was here (or

[70] Daniel, 102.

more accurately, I encountered this unit of railroad equipment), I have made a name for myself, this is my brand/logo/image. Through moniker writing, and indeed all graffiti written on mobile objects, transportation networks become communication networks. As Gastman writes, "The railroad is a continually changing facet of the American economy, landscape, and culture, yet rail workers, hobos, and graffiti writers continue to use the sides of freight cars in an unceasing dialogue with each other as well as the general public."[71]

To See and Be Seen

The traces of presence that characterize graffiti are temporary. Sometimes the traces outlive their creators, but paint is covered over, inscriptions are erased, colors fade, boxcars oxidize, etchings dull and crumble, and the locations that people mark eventually decay and disappear. The thousands (or possibly tens of thousands) of Taki 183's tags on New York streets in the early 1970s have probably all disappeared. Finding one of Herbert Meyer's monikers today, even though he drew several hundred thousand of them over 35 years, is an exceedingly rare event. Recognizing graffiti's ephemeral nature, at least since the 1930s some have taken it upon themselves to document the traces they encounter.

Working in the tradition of French street photography, Hungarian-born artist and photographer Brassai in 1932 began recording in notebooks and documenting the graffiti in Paris, considering the city streets to be a large outdoor art gallery. A book of his photographs and critique of these etchings and carvings was finally published in 1960. He found that the marks generally fell into the same categories: birth of man, life, love, death, magic, animals, the mask, and the face.[72] His photographs show carved hearts, human

[71] Gastman, et al., 310. Bill Daniel refers to it as a form of social networking (5).

[72] Agnes de Gouvion Saint-Cyr, *Brassai: For the Love of Paris* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013), 16. Brassai first exhibited his photographs of graffiti at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1956.

figures, skulls, and the occasional name or set of initials. "Walls have always exerted a kind of fascination over me," said Brassai in 1958. "My preference has often leaned towards this other 'nature,' artificial, urban, the one imbued with humanity, infinitely rich in allusions—as Leonardo da Vinci long ago pointed out—and the ephemeral language that it has engendered."[73] Brassai believed that graffiti, like most of the things he photographed, was at once banal and marvelous. "The bastard art of these disreputable streets…has become a criterion of value," he writes. "Its law is formal; it upsets our laboriously established aesthetic canons."[74] Or as Agnes Saint-Cyr writes, Brassai revealed graffiti for what it was: "a vernacular expression transformed into a work of art, an impulsive gesture destined to persist in time, desperate evidence left by the forgotten of society, a casual scratch appropriated by a child or an artist" that "developed into a cornerstone of the contemporary imagination."[75] To Brassai, the graffiti inscribed into stone Parisian walls was one of many things that made the city simultaneously unique and universal.

Other photographers have upon occasion expressed a similar interest in documenting vernacular drawings and inscriptions. Ansel Adams, much better known for his landscape photographs, captured an image of wall etchings around 1960, called *Wall Writing, Hornitos, California*, that looks very similar to Brassai's work. Along with scenes of Depression-era poverty in the American South, Walker Evans took a number of photographs of crudely-drawn roadside signs in the 1930s.[76] Helen Levitt, who actively photographed everyday life in New York for nearly seventy years, spent a decade

[73] Saint-Cyr, 69, originally from the preface to Brassai's exhibition catalog at the ICA in London in 1958.
[74] Ibid, 71. Originally published in Albert Skira's surrealist publication *Minotaure* in 1933.
[75] Ibid, 71.
[76] Carlo McCormick, "The Writing on the Wall," in Jeffrey Deitch, et al., *Art in the Streets* (New York: Skira Rizzoli Publications, 2011), 19-25.

documenting children's chalk drawings – perhaps the most ephemeral medium for creating public artwork.[77] Levitt's photographs of streets, walls, and sidewalks depict numerous child-drawn figures and words that are not dissimilar to the inscriptions recorded by Brassai in Paris around the same time, many of which were also created by children.

Not long after large quantities of names began appearing on New York streets and subways, people began documenting them. Mervyn Kurlansky's *The Faith of Graffiti*, featuring photographs by Jon Naar and a Norman Mailer essay by the same name, was issued in 1974. The following year, Cesaretti's book about Chicano graffiti in Los Angeles was published, though in limited numbers. Craig Castleman's *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*, published in 1982, was the first comprehensive history of the movement, then barely a decade old. In 1983-84, three films—*Style Wars*, *Wild Style*, and *Beat Street*—were all released, exposing graffiti and its associated hip-hop culture to a much wider audience. Also in 1983, the first regular graffiti zine was produced, *Subway Sun* (later changed to *International Graffiti Times*). *Ghetto Art*, founded in 1987 in Los Angeles, would be the first full-color graffiti zine after being rebranded as *Can Control* a few years later. Dozens of other publications devoted to documenting graffiti were started in the 1990s and by the end of the decade, websites such as *Artcrimes* spread the culture even further.[78]

The role of photography in documenting graffiti was threefold. First, it preserved the trace for longer than it would remain in physical space. Sometimes the photograph would be the only proof that existed as the physical traces were quickly erased or covered

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[77] Helen Levitt, *In the Street: Chalk Drawings and Messages, New York City, 1938-1948* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).

[78] Gastman and Neelon describe the growth of such publications in the 1980s on pages 260-261; they discuss the graffiti "media explosion" in the 1990s on pages 376-377.

over. Second, it provided an opportunity for people to consume graffiti. Original snapshots were widely exchanged among members of what became a nationwide community of graffiti photographers, some of which would eventually be published in magazines, others carefully stored in shoeboxes or photo albums as collected objects. Finally, and I believe most importantly, photography changed the type of location preferred by graffiti writers. Whereas in the 1970s graffiti was intentionally written where it would be seen by the most people, it was subject to erasure, either by the authorities or other writers. To some, it made more sense to find a secluded location like an abandoned building or empty drainage tunnel to create a more elaborate piece that few people would see in person but thousands might see in a magazine—or tens of thousands might see online.

Photographically documenting graffiti extends further back than the New York subway days. Recognizing the ephemeral nature of graffiti, Brassai wrote in 1960, "They appeal to the photographer, saying, 'Save me, take me with you for tomorrow, I'm no longer here.'"[79] Or as Carlo McCormick puts it, "The impermanence of the momentary gesture, the writing by faceless authors for an inattentive (and often unsympathetic) audience set against the vicissitudes of time and the elements, would leave no trace in our collective memory if it were not for those who choose to bear witness and to preserve memory."[80] Brassai, McCormick, and the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of amateur photographers who capture images of graffiti recognize the importance of documenting these traces because each is a temporary record.

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[79] Brassai, *Graffiti* (Stuttgart: Berlag, 1960), 7. Cited in Riesner, 96.
[80] McCormick, 21.

Ephemerality and Permanence

The common characteristic to concepts discussed in this chapter is ephemerality. Our presence in physical spaces is temporary, so a strategy to counteract this is to leave a physical trace. The trace extends beyond the duration of the physical presence, but it is temporary as logbooks deteriorate and graffiti fades and is painted over. Visual documentation of the trace extends this longevity even further, but it too is subject to decay as photographs fade, tear, or become lost. The impulse to document our presence may be a tacit acknowledgement of eventual physical death or it may be a way to broadcast to others our own sense of self-importance. Perhaps it is both.

I was here is as much a declaration as a reification of our own being. The act of creating the trace of our being demonstrates to others that we exist as it reaffirms to ourselves of the same thing. Ivor Noel Hume mentions a wall painting from the Eighteenth Dynasty of ancient Egypt, upon which a "D. Bushnells of Ohio" recorded his presence on November 14, 1839. (Lord Byron is known to have written his name on the Acropolis as well). In attempting to articulate the human impulse to create a record of our having-been-there, Hume writes,

> Although nothing could have induced me to follow in my predecessors' monstrous footsteps, I found myself sharing their compulsion to leave a mark at the fountainhead of history and, picking up a piece of flint, I scratched my initials on a modern Arab potsherd and left it in the desert somewhere south of Tell el-Amarna. Why? I asked myself. Perhaps because no matter how firm or shattered are our religious beliefs, we all seek some measure of immortality, even if it is no more than a personalized potsherd to remind posterity that we once were here.[81]

Hume disapproves of Bushnells's choice of location to record his presence, yet cannot help but leave a trace of his own on a found object.

[81] Ivor Noel Hume, *All the Best Rubbish* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 296-297.

Tim Ingold, whose articulation of traces begins this chapter, explores what happens when a line is deconstructed into smaller intervals. The line, with a beginning and end, implies movement and suggests a direction (even if the direction is not known). Using an idea about lines from artist Paul Klee, Ingold writes, “Whereas the active line on a walk is dynamic, the line that connects adjacent points is, according to Klee, ‘the quintessence of the static.’”[82] If a curved line is then reduced to incremental points (the example in Ingold is wavy and looped) and the original line is erased, to redraw the line along the points results in a jagged, angular series of shorter lines. “What we see is no longer the *trace of a gesture*,” writes Ingold, “but an assembly of *point-to-point connectors*.”[83]

It is difficult to determine an exact sequence to traces such as graffiti left in physical space. After the fact, they are declarations of being in place only at some indistinct point in the past: I was here, I was there, I was also here. New technologies enable mobilities to be documented not only sequentially, but in increasingly small increments. Yet even GPS-enabled devices, the most precise apparatuses presently available, cannot provide real-time location data because of the small amount of time needed to communication between satellite and receiver. As the next chapter discusses, there has been a dramatic increase in the ways physical movement is not just documented, but actively tracked and monitored—sometimes with our consent, sometimes not—and these ways are closer than ever to accurately locating the body and object in place *and* time. We are rapidly moving from *I*

[82] Ingold, 73.

[83] Ingold, 74-75. Italics present in the source. One of Ingold’s ideas in chapter 3, “Up Across and Along,” is that over the course of history, fluid lines have been gradually replaced by paths between incremental points and wayfaring (a sort of metaphysical wandering and finding one’s way through space) has become increasingly destination-oriented.

was here to *I am here*; from traces to tracking, and the implications of this shift have enormous consequences.

Chapter 4: From Pizza to Parolees:

The Prevalence of Location Monitoring in Everyday Life

TRACKING THE MUNDANE

In January 2008, after a few weeks of beta testing, Domino's Pizza introduced what it called Pizza Tracker. The press release excitedly listed the benefits of this "revolutionary technology" – the ability for Domino's customers to follow the progress of their order from the moment they click the online "Place Order" button, through the preparation, cooking, and transport of their food. Claiming an accuracy of forty seconds, the system could reveal where a customer's pizza was in the order process, though not its precise physical location. "Customers using Pizza Tracker will no longer have to wonder where their pizza is in the ordering process – it takes the 'mystery' out of waiting for their pizza," said Domino's chief information officer Chris McGlothlin in the press release, "Not only that, it's entertaining too."[1] Not to be outdone, a group of eleven Papa John's locations in the Huntsville, Alabama, area became one of the first customers of a tech startup called TrackMyPizza, which enabled customers to monitor the physical location of their pizza by providing delivery drivers with GPS-enabled handsets that reveal location data to TrackMyPizza's server every fifteen seconds. Notably, the company was started by two telemetry scientists who spent a decade working to track the location of missiles for the

[1] "Domino's Launches Revolutionary Customer Tool: Pizza Tracker," *PRNewswire.com*, January 30, 2008, http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/dominos-launches-revolutionary-customer-tool-pizza-trackertm-57414502.html.

United States armed forces, one of many examples of a longstanding connection between military technology, tracking, and surveillance.[2]

The existence and widespread use of an app that allows customers to monitor the progress of their pizza delivery is just one example of how location tracking and monitoring have permeated even the most mundane aspects of everyday life. While tracking has numerous military, scientific, navigational, commercial, and ludic applications, most telling of all is the increase in the last three decades in monitoring the physical location of those awaiting sentencing, on parole, or under house arrest as part of their punitive sentencing. The logics of surveillance and security dictate that ankle-worn monitoring devices and systems of house arrest enable individuals to spend time with loved ones, earn wages, and live something resembling a "normal" life. This also becomes an especially attractive option for state governments seeking to alleviate overcrowded prisons and reduce expenditures. However, this seemingly benevolent paternalism raises questions about the consequences of making the prison everywhere, transforming the home itself into an apparatus of the criminal justice system – a home that is not (and can never truly be) *home*.

These applications of punitive monitoring have become increasingly common since the mid-1980s, paralleled by forms of voluntary geolocation that have increased with the prevalence of GPS receivers a decade later. While the ludic possibilities of these devices allow some to critique or play within systems of surveillance, the various iterations of voluntarily subjecting oneself to location data collection serve to normalize geolocation, thereby reducing people to data points, making the tracking of the physical movement of

[2] Marianne McGee, "GPS Comes to High-Tech Pizza-Delivery Tracking," *Information Week*, February 1, 2008.

objects and bodies more and more a part of everyday life even as concerns over privacy and data collection continue to increase.

While monitoring the physical movement of people is a relatively recent phenomenon, comparatively primitive forms of object tracking have existed for more than two millennia. These earliest examples were used for experiments and communication, and were only able to identify origin and destination, such as the location of messages in bottles, which can only be known upon dispersal and retrieval. This experiment method has been attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Theophrastus, who in 310 BC used bottles to show that the Mediterranean Sea was formed by the inflowing Atlantic Ocean. The English Navy in the sixteenth century used bottled messages to send information about enemy positions. In 1784 shipwrecked Japanese sailor Chunosuke Matsuyama wrote an account of his ordeal that was undiscovered until 1935. During the First World War, British soldier Thomas Hughes sent out a bottle containing a letter to his wife two days before he was killed in combat, a message that wasn't recovered until 1999. An experiment conducted by the Glasgow School of Navigation in June 1914 to test currents in the seas around Scotland consisted of nearly 1,900 bottles cast into the water, one of which was recovered in 2012, nearly a century after the initial experiment.

Being subject to water currents, this particular form of communication is unpredictable. The most that can be known about the traveling objects is their origin and destination, and even then only if the object is successfully recovered. The method cannot indicate an exact route or speed, only approximations, and these become exponentially more inaccurate the more time elapses between dispersal and retrieval.[3]

[3] Recognizing this, in 2007 artist Layla Curtis created a project called *Message in a Bottle: From Ramsgate to the Chatham Islands*, releasing fifty GPS-equipped bottles with an instruction to finders to report the

Today the most precise and widespread form of tracking involves communication sent from geostationary satellites to GPS receivers that provide location data at much smaller intervals (though not quite in real time) between origin and destination. A notable intersection of these two forms of object tracking occurred with the capture and vandalism of the world's largest message in a bottle, launched in March 2013. Weighing two and a half tons and measuring thirty feet in length, the ocean-going craft was set adrift 200 miles off the coast of the Canary Islands as a promotional venture for Norwegian soft drink company Solo. People were invited to follow the journey online via a GPS that gave regular updates and to guess where it would end up. The winner was promised a bottle of Solo for each nautical mile traveled.

The giant bottle was expected to cross the Atlantic in about seventy days but on August 14, 145 days after launch, Solo announced that they had lost satellite contact with the bottle somewhere east of Barbados.[4] It then drifted southwest for another two weeks before being spotted by the Venezuelan Coast Guard near a group of islands called Los Roques about 100 miles north of the Venezuelan mainland. A large hole had been cut in the side and the camera, satellite antenna, batteries, solar panels and case of twenty four Solo bottles had been taken, indicating the bottle had been tracked and captured by a group of high-tech pirates.[5] This example is an interesting case that demonstrates both the widespread use of GPS-based tracking for rather mundane purposes and the fact that public

location of the bottle and then return it to the sea. See Layla Curtis, "Message in a Bottle," in *Else/Where: New Cartographies of Networks and Territories*, ed. Janet Abrams and Peter Hall (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Design Institute, 2006), 276-279.

[4] From http://www.multivu.com/mnr/58710-solo-worlds-largest-message-in-a-bottle. A video on the website explains the project in detail.

[5] "Real-Life Pirate of the Caribbean Attack! The World's Largest Message-in-the-Bottle Robbed of All Technical Equipment," *PRNewswire.com*, August 29, 2013, http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/real-life-pirates-of-the-caribbean-attack-the-worlds-largest-message-in-the-bottle-robbed-of-all-technical-equipment-221623881.html.

location disclosure can have unintended consequences, two concepts that will be discussed further in this chapter.

The internet is perhaps the most important technological development that enabled more and more people to participate in various iterations of object tracking, which ultimately has the effect of further normalizing location-based data collection and surveillance. Wheresgeorge, a website that allows users to record the location of paper currency, was started in late 1998 by computer consultant Hank Eskin. Recognizing that each dollar bill has a unique serial number, Eskin figured it would be an interesting experiment to have people enter where they received and spent money in order to determine how far currency travels. Eskin found that $1 and $5 bills tended to circulate rather quickly in the same geographic areas and bills of a higher denomination tended to travel much farther, more commonly to other countries than bills of a lower denomination.[6]

Some particularly active participants refer to themselves as "Georgers" and sometimes go to great lengths to improve their "George score" (a rank on the website calculated by the number of bills entered by a particular user and the distance those bills have traveled): borrowing and entering the serial numbers of paper currency from friends and family members, stamping the bills with a description of what wheresgeorge is, and paying for large purchases in cash. "I live vicariously through my bills," says Dwayne Richardson, a self-described Georger. "It's like a message in a bottle."[7] Giuseppe

[6] As of late February 2016, nearly 260 million unique bills have been entered onto the website with a collective value of almost $1.4 billion. Data available at www.wheresgeorge.com, accessed February 26, 2016.

[7] Tatiana Serafin, "Cash Trail," *Forbes*, March 28, 2005, 64. In 2012 a Phoenix man was in the news for writing his home address on the backs of dollar bills with the message "Please return this bill to me. I am very poor." He had been doing this for nearly a decade, averaging $2 per day returned to his home. Jason Barry, "Valley Man Finds Way to Have Spent Money Come Back," *KPHO.com*, February 3, 2012, http://www.kpho.com/story/16674753.

Parascandolo, who entered nearly 70,000 bills between 2000 and 2002, feels similarly: "I wish I had been to places my bill ended up sometimes." Still, even enthusiastic participants admit tracking the movement of paper currency is an odd pursuit. One wheresgeorge participant concedes, "you have to be intrigued by the thrill of seeing where money goes." Says another self-described "Georger" Tom Walsh, "You either get it, or you don't."[8]

Wheresgeorge is not unlike a handful of other hobbies dedicated to tracking the movement of mobile objects. Calling itself "an unlikely global sociology experiment," BookCrossing is a website, founded in 2001, that allows users to download unique identification codes that are then attached to physical books which are "released" and then "captured" by other BookCrossing participants. "Think of it as a passport enabling your book to travel the world without getting lost," the website claims. Books can be exchanged directly among members, intentionally left in public places in the hopes another person will find them, or left in so-called "Official BookCrossing Zones," physical locations where books are regularly left and recovered, but the important point is that their movement from place to place is tracked. Giving these books remarkably human characteristics, the website claims,

> Your book doesn't want to spend its life on your shelf gathering dust; it wants to get out there and touch lives! So leave your labeled book on a park bench on a summer day, in a train station, on the table in your favorite coffee shop—anywhere it's likely to be caught by another delighted reader. Then come back and read about your book's new adventures![9]

The creators of BookCrossing acknowledge being inspired by wheresgeorge, geocaching, and PhotoTag, a now-defunct online community dedicated to releasing disposable cameras

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[8] Jennifer Saranow, "Follow the Money: 'Where's George' Game Tracks Your Bills," *Washington Post*, April 15, 2002.

[9] From www.bookcrossing.com, accessed February 27, 2016. The website claims a membership of 1.5 million users who have moved more than eleven million books in 132 countries.

and posting the photographs along with their locations. By their own admission, the creators thought to themselves, "Okay, what's something else that people would have fun releasing and then tracking?"[10] This statement suggests the primary motivation for starting the activity and corresponding website was an interest in tracking mobile objects rather than a particular interest in books themselves.

These organized hobbies and practices could not exist without the internet. And notably, while they each seem to be about tracking the locations of objects as they move from place to place, it might make more sense to consider them, like geocaching, offline hobbies facilitated by online platforms. Objects cannot move without the assistance of human bodies. So in a way, these hobbies dedicated to following the movement of paper currency and books is more about the mobility of the anonymous people who facilitate the movement of these objects.[11]

These various examples of hobbies involving object tracking have developed as a result of widespread use and application of the internet. However, similar activities have paralleled an increase in tracking for commercial purposes. The implementation of barcodes in the early 1970s allowed a rudimentary form of tracking (generally for purchasing and inventory) but it was not until the innovation of mobile barcode scanners in the following decade that the location of moving objects could be reliably tracked.[12] In

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Recognizing this fact, theoretical physicist Dirk Brockmann used data from half a million wheresgeorge entries to model human mobility, identifying what he calls "effective communities" in the United States, in order to create models to better predict the spread of epidemic diseases. See Robert Krulwich, "A 'Whom Do You Hang With?' Map of America," *NPR.org*, April 17, 2013, http://npr.org/blogs/krulwich/2013/04/16/177512687.

[12] Nigel Thrift, "Remembering the Technological Unconscious by Foregrounding Knowledges of Position," *Environment and Planning* 22 (2004), 183. According to Thrift, the idea for barcodes dates to 1949, was patented in 1952, and first used in 1974. In 2002, barcodes were used by 900,000 companies and scanned five billion times per day.

1986, after several years of experimenting with various devices, Federal Express introduced a comprehensive package tracking system that used a scanning apparatus developed by Hand Held Devices called "SuperTracker," enabling packages to be scanned as they moved through different points in the Federal Express system.[13]

The widespread use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chips to track consumer products is another manifestation of an increasing awareness and emphasis on the mobility of objects, though they are most commonly used to track commercial purchases. From the perspective of suppliers, retailers and marketers, RFID chips allow material objects to be monitored and tracked as they are produced and sold. The chips operate by transmitting radio waves to communicate information to remotely-located receivers. Because these transmission distances are irrespective of distinctions between public and private space, and the data connected to the chips are remotely readable, their increasing use has elicited concerns about privacy.[14] There was some uproar following the Food and Drug Administration's approval of a human-implantable RFID microchip called VeriChip in 2004, though the company producing the devices discontinued them in 2010.

The ability of hobbyists to track mobile objects and the attention given to their movement gives these things even more importance beyond their use value as paper

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[13] For an exhaustive history of the development of package tracking technology at FedEx between 1977 and 1987, see Carl Nehls, "Custodial Package Tracking at Federal Express," in *Managing Innovation: Cases from the Service Industries*, ed. Bruce R. Guile and James Brian Quinn (Washington: National Academy Press, 1988), 57-81.
The Smithsonian Museum possesses an original SuperTracker device as part of their "American Enterprise" business history collection. In their words, "Providing information about a package's location, status, and movement became an integral part of delivery companies, with every major carrier implementing a package tracking system." From http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1398551, accessed February 27, 2016.

[14] One particularly reactionary writing about RFID chips is Katherine Albrecht and Liz McIntyre, *Spychips: How Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track Your Every Move with RFID* (Nashville: Nelson Current, 2005). Another is David Holtzman, *Privacy Lost: How Technology is Endangering Your Privacy* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006).

currency or books. Recalling the significance placed upon possessions owned by those profiled in Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton's sociological study *The Meaning of Things*, the creators of BookCrossing claim, "books were more than just tangible objects, rather they possessed elements of emotional attachment and strong opinion; books were not only items collected and revered, but were intrinsically shared."[15] Or as Carl Nehls writes in his comprehensive history of barcode scanners at Federal Express in the 1970s and 1980s, the commercial need to develop a system that would allow the monitoring and documentation of the location of packages processed and transported by the company "was driven by the concept that the information about the package is as important as the package itself."[16] Each of the examples in the previous few paragraphs – hobbies consisting of documenting the location of mobile objects and the advent of package tracking in the shipping industry – demonstrate an increase in the availability of location data for objects and, by extension, mobile human bodies. This last point will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

SCIENTIFIC, MILITARY, AND COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

Some fifty million shipping containers travel by sea each year, of which up to several thousand are lost overboard.[17] Not all the cargo is lost, however, and occasionally a fortuitous accident has helped further the science of oceanography. In May 1990, a cargo

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[15] From www.bookcrossing.com, accessed February 27, 2016. One could also argue that objects, because of their movement through various places, acquire a biography. For more on this concept, see Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 64-92.

[16] Nehls, in Guile and Quinn, 79.

[17] Olivia Yasukawa, "Ducks Overboard! What Happens to Goods Lost at Sea?" *CNN.com*, October 9, 2013, http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/09/business/goods-lost-at-sea. Some estimates place the number of shipping containers lost annually at 10,000; the World Shipping Council, a group comprised of ocean shippers claims the number is closer to 350 per year.

ship leaving South Korea encountered a storm that sent several shipping containers loaded with 60,000 Nike shoes into the North Pacific. By the following winter, many of these shoes came to rest along a stretch of beaches from British Columbia to Oregon, and by mid-1992 they began washing up on beaches on the northern end of the island of Hawaii. Oceanographers Curtis Ebbesmeyer and James Ingraham of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) used the movement of these shoes to test existing theories of ocean currents.[18]

Another example occurred in January 1992 when a shipping container carrying some 29,000 rubber ducks (called Friendly Floatees) fell from a cargo ship during a storm in the same region of the North Pacific, providing another opportunity to test ocean current models by recording where the ducks landed ashore. The first ducks washed up near Sitka, Alaska, ten months after the incident, having traveled about 2,000 miles. About two thirds of the ducks washed up in Australia, Indonesia, Japan, the Pacific Northwest, and the west coast of South America.[19] Using data based on models they had developed, Ebbesmeyer and Ingraham correctly predicted more rubber ducks would be deposited on Washington shorelines in 1996, and that the remainder would float north through the Bering Strait, become seasonally locked in arctic ice before making their way around Greenland, and wash up along beaches in the far north Atlantic. Exactly as the two oceanographers had predicted, between 2004 and 2007 the same rubber ducks that fell overboard in the North

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[18] Donovan Hohn, *Moby Duck: The True Story of 28,800 Bath Toys Lost at Sea and the Beachcombers, Oceanographers, Environmentalists, and Fools, Including the Author, Who Went in Search of Them* (New York: Penguin, 2012).

[19] Keith Heidorn, "Of Shoes and Ships and Rubber Ducks and a Message in a Bottle," *Islandnet.com*, March 17, 1999, http://www.islandnet.com/~see/weather/elements/shoes.htm.

Pacific began appearing on shores in Maine, Iceland, Scandinavia, and the British Isles. The data enabled them to further refine data on the speed and direction of ocean currents.

Regarding a different kind of bird, the sciences have been using different forms of tracking animals to learn about colony location and patterns of migration for several centuries. In 1710 a gray heron was captured in Germany carrying several metal rings indicating the bird's origin to be Turkey. Danish ornithologist C. C. Mortensen is credited as being the first to systematically place bands on the legs of birds for the purpose of identifying migration patterns, doing so in 1899.[20] The practice grew considerably during the first two decades of the twentieth century, when ornithologists established several stations in ten European nations until the outbreak of war in 1914.

Despite enthusiasm for the practice, bird banding is not a particularly effective means of tracking. The method only allows the monitoring of origin and destination. Even under the best circumstances only about five percent of banded birds are successfully recovered.[21] There is no way to track the number of miles a bird travels in a single day, nor can the method reliably tell if a specific bird makes an identical migration pattern each year.

Today many birds and endangered animals carry a small device that can be tracked by radio receiver or satellite. This comparatively advanced method allows for an animal's location to be tracked at much smaller intervals than origin and destination, sometimes

[20] Frederick C. Lincoln, "The History and Purposes of Bird Banding," *The Auk* 38, no. 2 (April 1921), 218. The data collected from bird banding, largely through the efforts of Canadian conservationist Jack Miner, led to the establishment of the US Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which made it unlawful to capture or kill certain migratory birds.

[21] Between 1920 and 1940 amateur and professional ornithologists in the United States banded more than three million birds, of which only about three percent were successfully recovered and recorded. See James McDarra, "Bird-Banding," *The Emu* 40, no. 4 (January 1940), 292.

yielding unexpected results. During summer 2013 in Belgium, a group of about twenty lesser black-backed gulls equipped with GPS tags as part of a project based at the University of Amsterdam were observed consistently making flights to an industrial section in the city of Moeskroen, 65 km from their colony. When researchers went to investigate the reason, they found a potato chip factory was keeping discarded chips in open containers, attracting the birds.[22]

Other than the benefit to scientific knowledge, there seems to have been a fixation on data collection. As Leon Cole wrote in 1920 during the height of the phenomenon, "Bird-banding not only has its romance, but it seems to stimulate the imagination."[23] After describing the relatively mundane activities of the American Ornithologists' Union and the formation of the American Bird Banding Association, Cole includes the excited account of Charles Miller, director of the Society for the Study of Bird Life. Upon finding a Baltimore oriole that had been banded in 1909 and then retrapped four times the following year, Miller breathlessly reports, "I should have liked to have been a speck on that band! What interesting things could be reported."[24]

For Miller, banded birds contribute something not only to science but to those who record the data, an idea consistent with McDarra's belief about banded birds that "the individual bird is singled out for observation and acquires a new value and significance."[25] However, while these two sources suggest an added value to these banded and recorded

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[22] "Lesser Black-backed Gulls feed on potato crisps in Moeskroen," *University of Amsterdam*, November 13, 2013. http://www.uva-bits.nl/news/lesser-black-backed-gulls-feeding-on-potato-crisps-in-moeskroen.
[23] Leon J. Cole, "The Early History of Bird Banding in America," *The Wilson Bulletin* 34, no. 2 (June 1922), 111. Cole, a geneticist, was the first to propose and implement a comprehensive bird banding program in the United States.
[24] Cole, 112.
[25] McDarra, 293.

birds, they seem to be treated more as objects and numerical data than living beings, thus also reducing their individual importance somewhat, a complicated subjectivity underlying other forms of bodily tracking and surveillance to be discussed later.

Tracking and monitoring had specific applications during the cold war. Beginning in the mid-1950s, the United States and Canada put forth enormous expense and effort constructing the Distant Early Warning Line, a series of radar stations, in an effort to detect bomber attacks or missiles launched from the Soviet Union. This particular application of object tracking, taking the form of radar, is part of a long history of military surveillance and reconnaissance, but one of its more innocuous forms of object tracking happened by accident. On December 24, 1955, a Sears store in Colorado Springs placed a newspaper offering children the opportunity to call the store's telephone number, which they claimed to be Santa Claus's direct line. Despite the instruction of "kiddies be sure and dial the correct number," the telephone number, misprinted in the ad, was actually that of the nearby Continental Air Defense Command Center (later known as NORAD). After receiving several unexpected calls from local children on a top-secret telephone line, the commanding officer Colonel Harry Shoup told his staff to provide the current location for Santa Claus. Shoup and his staff chose to repeat the Santa Tracker the following year and each year since. In December 2013, NORAD's Santa Tracker received nearly twenty million visits to their website and more than 117,000 telephone calls.[26]

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[26] Jasmyn Belcher Morris, "NORAD's Santa Tracker Began with a Typo and a Good Sport," *NPR.org*, December 19, 2014, www.npr.org/2014/12/19/371647099. A similar application is the various flight trackers available that offer the ability to track the movement of commercial passenger and cargo airplanes including origin, destination, current location, and arrival time. Many airlines such as JetBlue offer this data through their website while www.flightaware.com tracks every commercial flight in the air at any given time. The data isn't all that different from that available to air traffic control towers or military radar stations that have been in use since the 1940s.

Experiments with radio waves and radar date to the late nineteenth century, leading to widespread military use during the Second World War. Wishing to circumvent the detection limitations of ground-based radar systems, the United States Air Force had been secretly conducting extremely high-altitude reconnaissance flights over Soviet airspace for about four years when, on May 1, 1960, a U-2 spy plane piloted by Gary Powers was shot down over the Russian city of Sverdlovsk. By the time Powers was shot down, the United States military was in the early stages of implementing a program called Discoverer, which would launch 132 spy satellites between August 1960 and the program's end in 1972.[27] However, as Bray points out, the satellites had their limitations: a temporary life span limited by film capacity, poor photographic resolution, and the length of time needed to retrieve and develop the film.

When the Discoverer program was terminated, the United States Military had already been working on what came to be known as the Defense Navigation Satellite System. This reconnaissance, unlike radar and aerial photography, would be global, work continuously in all weather, and be highly accurate. Aside from aerial imaging, the military launched twenty four NAVSTAR Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites between the mid-1970s and 1994 to provide precise locations of ships and personnel at a cost of more than $10 billion.[28]

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[27] Hiawatha Bray, *You Are Here: From the Compass to the GPS, the History and Future of How We Find Ourselves* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 161. The chapter from which this is taken, "Long Shots," provides a thorough synopsis of the role of aerial reconnaissance in military history. The public knew the program as Discoverer; the CIA, which was overseeing the program, referred to it as Corona.

[28] Lane DeNicola, "The Bundling of Geospatial Information with Everyday Experience," in *Surveillance and Security: Technological Politics and Power in Everyday Life*, ed. Torin Monahan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 247.

While GPS was developed initially for military use, civilians had only been able to access a second tier of the system. This so-called “selective availability” ensured that significantly greater accuracy was made available to military equipment with a somewhat less accurate version available for civilian consumers and waterborne navigation. In May 2000, selective availability was turned off by executive order, instantly increasing the accuracy of GPS receivers and providing a number of civil applications that had not been possible before. Within a few years, GPS receivers grew to be one of the best-selling consumer electronic devices along with personal computers and mobile phones.

In the realm of commerce, tracking airborne and ocean-going vessels is an increasingly important aspect of a globalized trade that has become increasingly standardized and streamlined. Numerous websites enable maritime professionals to track live ship positions, primarily for risk analysis but also to track shipments. The location data comes from Automatic Identification System (AIS), a navigation system that tracks position, course, and speed, used to identify and locate vessels by electronically exchanging data with other ships, base stations, and satellites. AIS was originally developed for collision avoidance but is now used for monitoring fishing fleets, maritime security, navigation, search and rescue, and accident investigation. This growth in the number of uses of this system mirrors the expansion of GPS-enabled applications.

One significant factor in the standardization of global shipping is the development of intermodal containers, which were first used commercially in 1956 when shipper Malcolm McLean sent fifty-eight containers on a specially outfitted ship from Newark to Houston. McLean would later create the first container ship company, Sea-Land, which grew to become one of the largest companies in the shipping industry.[29] By the 1980s containerization came to dominate the shipping industry, paralleling the rise of globalization that continues through the present. Today an estimated ninety percent of goods move by way of intermodal shipping containers.[30]

To demonstrate the movement of these steel boxes as well as document the ways globalization is affecting people around the word, BBC tracked a single shipping container from September 2008 to November 2009. The container left Greenoch, Scotland, carrying a shipment of whisky to Shanghai. From there it traveled to Yokohama, to Los Angeles, by rail to Newark, was loaded onto a ship to Caracas, to Santos, Brazil, traveled around Cape Horn to Hong Kong, visited Yokohama a second time, and stopped in Bangkok and Singapore before finally making its way back to Southampton, England, carrying a shipment of canned cat food.[31] By focusing on a single container, the BBC intended to show the widespread impact of global shipping and commerce. Similarly, a 2009 map from the *Journal of the Royal Society* showed a year's worth of travel itineraries from nearly 17,000 cargo ships, demonstrating that the heaviest shipping traffic passed through the Panama Canal followed by the Suez Canal and the Port of Shanghai.[32] Going to great

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[29] For a comprehensive though uncritical look at McLean, see Marc Levinson, *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[30] In addition to Levinson, see chapter 1 in William Leach, *Country of Exiles: The Destruction of Place in American Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000) and Rose George, *Ninety Percent of Everything: Inside Shipping, the Invisible Industry that Puts Clothes on Your Back, Gas in Your Car, and Food on Your Plate* (New York: Picador, 2013).

[31] Jeremy Hillman, "Lessons Learned as the Box Returns," *BBC.com*, November 4, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8314116.stm. The report does not identify the cargo during the container's intermediary trips.

[32] Tia Ghose, "A Year of Global Shipping Routes Mapped By GPS," *Wired*, January 5, 2010, http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2010/01/global-shipping-map.

lengths to demonstrate how truly globalized the shipping industry has become, Kumar and Hoffman ask readers to imagine that

> …a Greek owned vessel, built in Korea, may be chartered to a Danish operator, who employs Philippine seafarers via a Cypriot crewing agent, is registered in Panama, insured in the UK, and transports German made cargo in the name of a Swiss freight forwarder from a Dutch port to Argentina, through terminals that are concessioned to port operators from Hong Kong and Australia.[33]

The prevalence of these steel boxes, now numbering close to twenty million, has spawned a small subculture of amateur "container spotters" who photograph the boxes sitting at ports or on their way to destinations via freight trains or trucks. Some container spotters may be drawn to those from certain companies based on logo alone, such as Tim Hwang, creator of the *Container Guide*, who admits to being "an enormous fan of the Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL) insignia with the flower design in the O."[34] Others seem more interested in spotting older containers or those from smaller shipping companies, adding an element of rarity to the activity.[35] These hobbyists track the shipping containers in similar ways, though for entirely different reasons, as the companies who own or transport them.

On the ground, electronic vehicle tracking has existed for over three decades. One of the earliest to develop and use electronic vehicle tracking is LoJack, whose stolen vehicle recovery system operates using a silent radio transceiver. If the vehicle is reported stolen, the transceiver begins sending out signals that are picked up by tracking units in

[33] Shashi Kumar and Jan Hoffman, "Globalization: The Maritime Nexus," in *The Handbook of Maritime Economics and Transport Geography*, ed. Costas Grammenos (London: Lloyd's, 2002), 36.

[34] Nicola Twilley, "Container Spotting," *Ediblegeography*, March 17, 2014, http://www.ediblegeography.com/container-spotting. An example of a site that caters to container spotters is http://containerization.tumblr.com, a fan site with container-related photos. See also Tim Hwang, *The Container Guide* (Berkeley: Infrastructure Observatory Press, 2015).

[35] This is made apparent by the contributors to a website called *Matt's Place*, found at http://www.matts-place.com/intermodal/part1/sea_containers1.htm, accessed June 6, 2014. There are similar communities dedicated to "trainspotting" – locating and documenting active rail equipment.

police cars. The company, founded in 1978, claims to have recovered more than 300,000 stolen vehicles.[36] OnStar, a similar service developed by General Motors and introduced in 1995, can provide exact location, speed, and direction, in addition to turn-by-turn navigation and remote diagnostics systems. GPS-based vehicle tracking systems are now commonly used by trucking companies, public transit authorities, and fleet management in order to increase efficiency and provide location updates.[37] Auto insurance companies such as Progressive and Nationwide have given customers the option of having their driving habits tracked, generally with the incentive of the potential reduction of premiums. However, the same system has been used punitively, as was the case with Acme Rent-a-Car in New Haven, Connecticut, who fined drivers $150 if the GPS system in their vehicle showed they had been consistently speeding.[38]

TRACKING THE MOBILE HUMAN BODY

Vehicle tracking is very closely related to the monitoring of bodies and has enormous implications for surveillance. LoJack, the same company offering to assist with stolen vehicle recovery, expanded their services in 2008 to offer a tracking bracelet called SafetyNet for individuals with cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer's, autism, Down syndrome, and dementia who have an increased risk of becoming lost. The company suggests the service "improves the efficiency" of searching.[39] While LoJack claims the application of this technology is altruistic, this is the same premise as the monitors used to

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[36] Information from various pages on www.lojack.com, accessed September 28, 2014. LoJack has now expanded to tracking laptops and groups of people they term "at-risk."

[37] Holtzman, 181. Increasing "efficiency" by relying on GPS transponders is essentially an updated form of Taylorism that expands the potential of employers to monitor employees remotely.

[38] David Lyon, "Why Where You Are Matters," in Monahan, ed., 219.

[39] From http://www.lojack.com/People-at-Risk, accessed September 28, 2014.

track the location of those on probation, on parole, and those subject to restraining orders since the 1980s.

Initially developed by the Science Committee of Psychological Experimentation at Harvard University under the direction of social psychologists Ralph Kirkland Schwitzgebel (hereafter shortened to Gable, as the family changed the surname in 1983), his brother Robert, and electronics engineer William Spreck-Heard, location monitoring devices were part of a program called the Streetcorner Research Project, which sought to find new solutions to what they claimed to be a variety of social problems.[40] While the filmed results of their experiment, called "Location Monitoring and Communication Systems," suggest one potential application to be rescuing people subject to emergency medical conditions such as heart attack or epilepsy and mentally ill persons "who might become easily confused or lost in the city," it is clear that the primary purpose for such devices would be to serve as an alternative to imprisonment for juvenile and nonviolent offenders.[41] The Gables described the program as an "electronic parole and therapy system" and claimed it could "greatly extend the rights of youths and adults."

Their apparatus, called "Behavior Transmitter-Reinforcer" but never specifically named in the film, functioned similarly to a pager. The early prototype sent out tone signals to a small device worn inside a lapel or on a belt. The signals were a request for the wearer to call into the base station from the nearest telephone and verbally disclose his location.

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[40] The University of Akron houses the Archives of the History of American Psychology, which holds a collection related to the development and implementation of electronic monitoring devices. The project was initially approved by famed LSD advocate Timothy Leary and behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner. Ralph Schwitzgebel, the head of the research project, was reportedly inspired by a scene in the film *West Side Story*, in which the protagonist is killed by a rival gang member. See William D. Burrell and Robert S. Gable, "From B.F. Skinner to Spiderman to Martha Stewart: The Past, Present and Future of Electronic Monitoring of Offenders," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 46, no. 3-4 (2008): 101-118.

[41] Notably, the project hints at the possibility of being used as a navigation aid, some twenty-five years in advance of the availability of GPS devices in the consumer marketplace.

Somewhat optimistically, the film claims, "It may be possible, for the first time in history, to maintain twenty-four hour a day relationships beyond the usual geographic and temporal barriers." The Gables envisioned a sophisticated system that could regularly monitor the precise location of the device's wearer, but their prototype was limited by the technology of the time – the transmitter only had a range of a quarter mile and the wearer had to be within the distance of two receivers for their location to be displayed on a modified missile tracking screen at the base station.[42]

Recognizing the potential effects of this technology, the creators cautioned that "the misuse of such a monitoring system could result in an extreme restriction of civil rights – rights that are already too often abused." They suggested that unregulated use of such monitoring equipment would inevitably lead to the restriction of civil rights of youth, exactly the opposite of what the creators intended. When asked about the devices, the participants, all adolescent males, seemed mostly positive. They agreed that the main benefit was that it kept one out of jail, but also thought it was "cool that it beeped," and it could be "sorta like a live conscience." There might, in their estimation, be a stigma, but perhaps only for the first couple days. The Gables even went so far as to claim the receivers "might even become a prestige item…accomplished by incorporating into its design a transistor radio or walkie-talkie." Though the reactions in the film are generally positive, one boy said, "it's a crummy idea…I hate it. Who the hell wants to know where you are 24 hours a day? It's like havin' ya mother walkin' behind you, know what I mean?"

[42] Harvard Law Review Association, "Anthropotelemetry: Dr. Schwitzgebel's Machine," *Harvard Law Review* 80, no. 2 (December 1966), 403.

Despite this cry of dissent, most of the youth thought that as an alternative to incarceration, "location monitoring could greatly extend their rights."[43]

The film ends with a statement about the monitoring system that acknowledges its benefits but cautions against misuse: "This, as well as other uses of such electronic systems, raises many complex legal, political, and social issues that are not easily resolved. Hopefully, research may help to favorably resolve some of the major issues so that for all people of varying outlook and opinions, the world may become a safer, more friendly place to live." It is clear from its very origin that this form of punitive monitoring could very easily become problematic.

The same ethical concerns expressed by members of the Streetcorner Research Project in 1968 have been echoed many times since, perhaps most notably by the developers.[44] The debate, however, was limited to a small number of psychologists and legal experts until judicially sanctioned ankle monitors were first issued fifteen years later, bringing the issue to public attention. In 1977, Albuquerque district court Judge Jack Love, who first issued the devices six years later, was inspired by two items in a local newspaper. The first was a story about a new device that enabled ranchers to monitor their cattle by implanting radio transmitters under the skin of the animals, paired with a hand-held detector that received information about the animal's health and diet requirements. The

[43] Quotes from the past three paragraphs taken directly from a video clip labeled "Streetcorner Research, 1968." Gable Collection, Archives of the History of American Psychology, Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron.

[44] In a letter from Robert Gable to Center for the History of Psychology archivist David Baker dated August 21, 2008, Gable claims, "Particularly in the early years, there was considerable criticism of electronic monitoring. I have included a sample rejection letter from an editor of *Federal Probation* in 1966 which asserts that we are 'going to make automatons out of our parolees.' Finally, I have also included a copy of an edited volume titled, *Psychotechnology: Electronic Control of Mind and Behavior*. Another title that got us in trouble. I was called part of the 'thought police' by the Scientologists." From CHP Correspondence Records, Gable Collection, Archives of the History of American Psychology, Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron.

second was a comic strip in which the villain Kingpin was tracking Spider-Man with an electronic “radar device” bracelet attached to Spider-Man’s wrist.[45]

Judge Love spent the next few years unsuccessfully attempting to sell his idea of electronic monitoring to several technology companies. However in 1982, one of his contacts, computer sales representative Michael Goss, was so convinced at the commercial possibilities of Love’s idea that he left his job at Honeywell in 1982 to form National Incarceration Monitoring and Control Services (NIMCOS) with the intention of mass-producing monitoring units for law enforcement and incarceration agencies. Working closely with Love, NIMCOS built several prototypes that transmitted a radio signal to a receiving computer every sixty seconds with a strength of 150 feet.[46]

Goss gave an interview on Albuquerque NBC affiliate KOB on March 17, 1983, shortly after the device was first prescribed. Goss, who was not shy about being “quite gratified by the national media response to [the] product,” volunteered to wear one of the bracelets for a weekend, explained the voice-over, “to see if he can trick the bracelet into thinking he’s home when he’s not.”[47] In his interview, Goss emphasized the potential of the device to protect the public from those convicted of driving while intoxicated:

> The basic design of the system is geared towards DWI offenders who are basically good citizens who have jobs, they have families, they have homes that they traditionally live at over a period of time; they have a problem controlling themselves when they have been drinking. This system, while it would not prevent them from drinking, would keep them at home so that they weren’t out driving a 2,000 pound steel dangerous weapon killing people on the highways.

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[45] Matt Allyn, “Spider-Man Created the Electronic Bracelet?!” *Esquire*, May 4, 2007. Allyn suggests the idea for electronic monitoring originates with experiments conducted by the Army Signal Corps during World War I, though nothing was implemented as a result.

[46] Burrell and Gable, 105.

[47] Quotes and data from a video clip labeled “NIMCOS Promo News Clip.” Gable Collection, Archives of the History of American Psychology, Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron.

Goss' next rationale, much like the one envisioned by the Harvard researchers fifteen years earlier, was for the protection of the wearer. He claimed another use might be "a lady who has a problem being a shoplifter because she is indigent and wants things for her children or whether [sic] she has a psychological problem, she doesn't really deserve to be in jail because that's a very dangerous place, especially for women." Finally, Goss focused on the economic benefit of the devices, which would be the most common argument in favor of the monitoring system. He claimed such monitoring would cost less than $5 per day, adding, "you cannot feed a prisoner in an institution on that, much less house and supervise them with personnel." After a generous compliment from the interviewer, the clip cuts back to the KOB studio where two male anchors envision a different use for the monitoring devices:

> First anchor: "I think those electronic handcuffs might do wonders for marriage; you know…wives could put 'em on their husbands and…whaddya think?"
> Second anchor: "Husbands, like fires, go out if they're not attended."

The purpose of the NIMCOS-produced clip, which is a combination of news footage and an in-house interview resembling an infomercial, appears to be to promote their product to potential institutional buyers. The clip omits about thirty seconds of the original KOB broadcast immediately before a voiceover remarks, "a number of other judges have reservations about the idea." The broadcast then includes Albuquerque Metropolitan Court Judge William Short, who says bluntly, "a person who needs jail needs jail."[48] The selective editing of NIMCOS's promotional film to avoid mentioning an opposing viewpoint suggests public opinion was sharply divided on the implementation of monitoring devices.

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[48] This additional 30 seconds is from a video clip labeled "CBS 1983 1987." Gable Collection, Archives of the History of American Psychology, Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron.

Arguably, NIMCOS had to present itself as positively as possible because the first two years of the fledgling electronic monitoring industry were rather precarious. Judge Love sentenced three probationers to home detention in early 1983, two of whom violated the terms of their probation within sixty days. While the goal of keeping nonviolent offenders[49] out of jail was successfully demonstrated, philosophically consistent with the original Harvard Streetcorner Project, the goal of crime reduction was not. NIMCOS temporarily ceased production of its system, called the "GOSSlink," because the company had run out of money. Goss reached out to Boulder Industries (BI), producers of various electronic devices including what they called an "electronic dairy I.D. system." BI loaned NIMCOS $250,000 and arranged for a company called Control Data of Minneapolis to exclusively market an updated version of GOSSlink to correctional agencies. Control Data of Minneapolis nearly went bankrupt soon after, leaving NIMCOS in a precarious position, and eventually the assets were sold to BI for an additional $250,000.[50]

Four years later, on April 10, 1987, *CBS Evening News* ran a story that focused on monitoring devices as an effective, though imperfect, solution to prison overcrowding in Florida. The story begins with a comment from convicted offender John Jackson, who said, "If you're not home, you go to jail, simple as that. You got two choices, stay home or go to jail." The CBS cameras capture a demonstration of the system, which features a modem-like beep followed by a recorded voice:

> This is a community control officer calling to confirm the person under our curfew regulations is at home…At the sound of the tone, please confirm receipt of this message by stating your name, the time, and insert your wristlet…I will pause ten seconds for the correct person to come to the phone.

[49] Here and elsewhere in this chapter, "offenders" is used to refer to those convicted of criminal offenses in a court of law, echoing the language present in the original archival sources.
[50] Burrell and Gable, 106. In its first year of operation, NIMCOS/BI had only one other competitor, Controlled Activities Corporation (CONTRAC) of Key Largo, Florida.

The voice never reveals what will happen should the correct person (technically just the correct monitoring bracelet) *not* come in contact with the receiver. The CBS story then identifies some flaws with the system, including the fact that more than 1,000 offenders on house arrest in Florida "simply walked off" including eleven people accused of murder. Controversy erupted after a high profile murder was committed by someone who was under house arrest. These incidents prompted Florida State Attorney Frank Schaub to comment, "I always thought that house arrest was a kind of luxury reserved for deposed dictators and I don't think it should be reserved for criminals and convicts."[51]

By 1987, when this CBS broadcast aired, ten different companies were producing thousands of monitoring bracelets and receivers, hoping to find institutional buyers looking to alleviate prison overcrowding. Less than three years since NIMCOS's prototypes were first prescribed, more than fifty electronic monitoring programs had been initiated in 21 states. An industry newsletter was founded in 1987, *Offender Monitoring* (changed in 1989 to *Journal of Offender Monitoring*), and an estimated 4,000-5,000 offenders had worn electronic monitoring devices.[52]

Digital Products Corporation, who was at the time one of the major brands in commercial and home computing, produced a sales video that not only demonstrated the benefits of their "On Guard" monitoring system, but also explained some of the justifications for such systems existing in the first place. "Overcrowding in the Criminal Justice System has reached epic proportions," the video claims. "One sheriff had no choice but to simply let these convicted offenders go before completing their time." The footage

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[51] From video clip labeled "CBS 1983 1987" in the Gable Collection.
[52] Burrell and Gable, 106.

on the screen is from a KOIN news story showing a roll-up door lifting and perhaps forty men running out of the Multnomah County Detention Center. Emphasizing an economic rationale for monitoring, the narrator says, "Jails are expensive, dangerous, and overcrowded. There are too many inmates and not enough space." After explaining the basics of monitoring, the voiceover says, "The ultimate goal of electronic supervision and offender monitoring is to break the cycle of crime!" Peppy horns punctuate the shifts from scene to scene before the video announces proudly, "During the 1990s, electronic supervision and offender monitoring is experiencing explosive growth!" By the time the undated video was created, Digital Products Corp claims the company had sold more than 13,000 units to 313 agencies in 44 states and four nations.[53]

Mitsubishi designed and manufactured a system called Mitsubishi Electronic Monitoring System (MEMS). Their promotional video, which appears to have been made on a higher budget than Digital's, is structured in much the same way. The video starts with on a serious note: "America's correctional facilities are severely overcrowded. The costs for incarceration are astronomical and rising every day." Home detention, then, is one of the "most sensible options." MEMS contained a visual element similar to a webcam and the single-unit system looked rather like a small television monitor connected to a telephone. In their demonstration, the phone rings and the user is instructed to look into the monitor and touch their nose. Perhaps responding to criticisms of monitoring systems in general, MEMS claimed, "It monitors the *person*, not a device." The image was captured and sent via Visitel ("Mitsubishi's revolutionary visual telephone display") over telephone

[53] Quotes and data taken from a video clip labeled "Intro to Electronic Monitoring." Gable Collection, Archives of the History of American Psychology, Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron.

lines to a terminal which would print the image with a time stamp for "indisputable evidence of each transaction." There were apparently versions that could be equipped with a breath alcohol monitor, and a MEMS-PLUS ankle-worn system that offered continual radio frequency contact "for clients requiring full-time monitoring." Further emphasizing the economic benefits of MEMS, the video offered the idea of having offenders pay for the "privilege" of monitoring – "You can even pass the cost of participation onto the client."[54]

Calling those subject to such monitoring "clients" raises an important point, and tracing the nomenclature of such monitors demonstrates a shift in thinking about the devices themselves and those required to wear them. The prototypes used in Harvard's Streetcorner Research Project are referred to in the filmed results of the experiment as "equipment," "receiver," and "electronic system" while those testing the devices are (rightfully) called "volunteers." Dr. Robert Gable, in correspondence to the Archive of the History of American Psychology, refers to his donated collection of objects in neutral terms, calling them "offender monitoring devices," "equipment," and "devices."

By the late 1980s, when the devices were first being prescribed in large numbers, Dan Rather, in the 1987 *Nightly News* broadcast, calls the devices a "space age approach to incarceration" and "an electronic ball and chain," suggesting feelings about ankle-worn monitors were both utopic and dystopic. Ten years later, a CBS *60 Minutes* story refers to the devices more positively, calling them "the hottest trend in the corrections industry" and "technology's answer to overcrowded prisons and understaffed parole and probation

[54] Quotes and data taken from a video clip labeled "MEMS Video 1987." Gable Collection, Archives of the History of American Psychology, Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron.

departments," indicating the positives far outweigh the negatives, though the story itself is generally critical.[55]

In 1992, the CBS affiliate in Minneapolis ran a piece for the *Morning News* on the system featuring Dr. Marc Renzema, professor of criminal justice at Kutztown University and founder of the *Journal of Offender Monitoring*; Bob Yeakle of Corrections Services Incorporated (CSI); and Roger Lavallee, who was midway through a two-year house arrest sentence and participated via satellite uplink from Lake Worth, Florida. After some general commentary from Renzema including the mention that there were, at the time, 10,000 monitors in use compared to a prison population of one million with another three million on probation and parole, the host asks Lavallee to demonstrate how the system works. He asks Lavallee to cut off his ankle monitor and jokes, "I'll bet you don't mind doing this at all…probably…fantasized about this for about a year or so." Lavallee happily complies while answering more questions ("Have you ever walked off your property illegally? And isn't this better than sitting in prison? Is your life any better and are you doing anything to make your life any better?"). "Yes, definitely," he responds, "It's helped me out a great deal. I feel this has done an incredible job, it's really a miracle to me of how I've adjusted…I've been in jails and prisons for the last fifteen years now, in and out." Just then the computer that had been set up in the studio received an alert that Lavallee was in violation, prompting the host to comment, "Tamper alert…you just busted out, is that what

[55] From a video clip labeled "60 Minutes CBS 1997." Gable Collection, Archives of the History of American Psychology, Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron. The most common references to monitoring systems in each of the film clips in the possession of the CHP archive call them "devices" or "equipment." Those subject to this form of monitoring are most commonly referred to as "offenders."

happened?" Yeakle responds, "It's a violation…and we got ya." "Roger, I guess we'd better get that thing hooked up again before someone comes knocking at your door."[56]

The short vignette with Lavallee is remarkable for several reasons. First, it strongly suggests that Lavallee is better off with an ankle monitor than without. He very well may be, though the interview reveals nothing about his personal life or employment. Guided by Yeakle's very leading questions, Lavallee can do little but praise his technological subjectivity in the criminal justice system. Second, Yeakle, who exudes an unmistakable confidence in himself and his product, clearly has much to gain from both the publicity and the free televised demonstration of his monitoring device. Even the token expert, Dr. Marc Renzema, has little critique to offer, instead choosing to focus mostly on statistics. Finally, the television audience is provided a window into a fairly new system of surveillance that they likely would not have witnessed before. Viewers are invited to extrapolate Lavallee's experience onto the incarcerated population at large, and by this logic, if a self-admitted repeat offender praises the device, its benefits are undeniable.

The use of these punitive monitoring systems parallels a sharp rise in the incarceration rates and mandatory minimum sentences that accompanied the expanding War on Drugs in the 1980s and 90s, and this increased enforcement of laws pertaining to drug possession and other nonviolent crimes during this time disproportionately affected the poor and communities of color.[57] Correlating with a statistically significant difference

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[56] Quotes in this paragraph are from a video clip labeled "CBS Morning News 1992." Gable Collection, Archives of the History of American Psychology, Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron.

[57] The skyrocketing prison population between the mid-1970s and the present is well-documented elsewhere. According to Bureau of Justice Statistics, the prison population more than doubled between 1980 and 1990, and increased by another sixty percent by 2000. Data available at www.bjs.gov. See also Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (London: Verso, 1999). For a thorough discussion of the ways mass incarceration paralleling the War on Drugs has negatively impacted

in sentencing based on a convicted offender's race, whites were more likely to be prescribed ankle-worn monitoring devices than African-Americans, who were more likely to receive a prison sentence for committing similar crimes.[58] It may have been a deliberate decision that Lavallee, a rather harmless-seeming white male (at least for viewers of the CBS *Morning News*) was chosen to be the representative of punitive monitoring devices. In June 1986, William Horton, serving a life sentence in Massachusetts for murder, was released as part of a weekend furlough program. Nearly a year later he committed a rape, assault, and armed robbery in Maryland, eliciting severe criticism for both the furlough program and 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis, who had publicly supported the program while Governor of Massachusetts. Then-Vice President George H.W. Bush's "Weekend Passes" campaign ad associated Dukakis directly with Horton, damaging his campaign by playing up longstanding fears of African-American males as violent criminals. Though the Massachusetts weekend furlough program was not directly related to monitoring devices, the race-baiting of "Weekend Passes" suggested to viewers that certain convicted offenders (in the campaign ad coded as nonwhite) should remain in prison and not be given the relative freedom of mobility that electronic monitoring systems provided.

By the late 1990s, there was an increasingly visible and vocal backlash against electronic monitoring devices. The aforementioned 1997 *60 Minutes* feature story focuses on the imperfections of such systems and hint at their misuse.[59] Former Denver District

African-Americans in particular, see Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2012).

[58] See David B. Mustard, "Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Disparities in Sentencing: Evidence from the U.S. Federal Courts," *Journal of Law and Economics* 44, no. 1 (April 2001): 285-314.

[59] From the "60 Minutes CBS 1997" video clip in the Gable Collection. The *60 Minutes* segment does focus somewhat more on their economic benefits. For example, the piece claims, "There's a bunch of

Attorney Norm Early is quoted as saying, "It's not home arrest, it's not home detention, it's not home tracking, and it's not home monitoring…It's the ability to know if a person is within a certain confines during a specified period of time and that's it." While the systems were initially used for those convicted of misdemeanors and nonviolent crimes, by the late 1990s they were being used to monitor those convicted of violent crimes. The president of BI Incorporated, one of the first companies to manufacture the devices, is quoted as saying, "We have virtually every derivation of criminal that you can find, being monitored on our systems today…Do you release them absolutely free, free as you and I are free, or do you restrict their movements? Do you actually dictate some of the terms and conditions of their probation and parole?" This prompts Early to respond, "All you know is where they *aren't*, not where they are."[60] While use of the monitoring devices increased greatly during the 1990s, critics such as Early were highlighting some of the flaws with the system.

By the mid-2000s, such devices were sophisticated enough to include GPS monitoring, providing exact location rather than whether or not the device's wearer happened to be within a certain number of feet from the receiving unit. This more advanced system began to be used to monitor the location of convicted sex offenders, emboldening GPS manufacturers to propose expanding this type of monitoring to include undocumented immigrants, suspected gang members and truant students. It was this overuse that Dr. Robert Gable had cautioned against in the late 1960s. In a 2013 interview regarding the

positive things that can happen: [offenders] can work for a living and instead of being a ward of society they can actually pay taxes, they can pay restitution to their victims, and in many, many cases they *pay for the privilege* of being on home arrest." This last point echoes a similar statement that appeared in the promotional film for Mitsubishi's system, and was one of the key reasons for the popularity of such systems – that costs would be offset by those sentenced to wear the devices, enabling smaller institutions with smaller budgets to introduce electronic monitoring to their jurisdictions.

[60] Ibid.

expansion of tracking devices, Gable said, “It was supposed to be a pro-social tool, a way for offenders and agencies to remain in contact and offer positive support.”[61] The agencies were using GPS devices as a means of “control and punishment” of offenders rather than as a tool to help preserve their social and civil rights. After discussing politicians calling for expanded use of the devices in order to demonstrate a stance of being tough on crime, Gable said, “It’s a wayward technology that has become warped into a punishment routine.”[62]

COMPLICIT SURVEILLANCE AND CONSPICUOUS MOBILITY

Taken literally, Gable’s statement suggests that either there should be a difference between surveillance and punishment, or that the social experiments he and his Harvard team were conducting in the 1960s did not constitute punishment. This seems to contradict Foucault’s interpretation of Bentham, which has influenced a large body of sociological literature since the 1970s. In this formulation, power is possessed by an authority, exerted over individuals, and generated and expressed by surveillance.[63] As Bentham shows, and Foucault later emphasizes, the presence of a watcher occupying the guardhouse is not necessary for the system to function. However, with the development of new ways of watching and being watched, several scholars have shown how this top-down model of surveillance has become outdated. Dobson and Fisher, for example, explore how different technologies have influenced three different versions of the panoptic model, the most

[61] Mario Koran, “State’s GPS Monitoring of Offenders Raises Concern,” *The Cap Times* (Madison, WI), March 24, 2013.

[62] Gable has written a recent article commenting on location monitoring and what it has become. See Robert Gable, “Left to Their Own Devices: Should Manufacturers of Offender Monitoring Equipment Be Liable for Design Defect?” *University of Illinois Journal of Law, Technology, and Policy* (Fall 2009): 333-362.

[63] David Lyon, *Surveillance Studies: An Overview* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 23.

recent of which employs RFID chips and other forms of geolocation to achieve what they call "geoslavery."[64] As Kevin Haggerty writes, the panopticon as a scholarly model for surveillance has become overused and oppressive because "the panoptic model has become reified, directing scholarly attention to a select subset of attributes of surveillance."[65]

This set of attributes, according to Haggerty, should be expanded to include new forms of surveillance. Whereas the Foucauldian top-down model reinforces hierarchical power relations even while its subjects are acutely aware of its existence, new models are needed to incorporate systems of surveillance that are hidden (such as geolocative capabilities of smartphones) or that are willingly participated in (such as various social media platforms). It is this second subcategory of willful subjectivity that will be examined in the remainder of this chapter.

Building on Foucault's concept of *capillaries of power*, Alice Marwick suggests that voluntary location disclosure on various social media platforms constitute *social surveillance*. Unlike Foucault's model (vis-à-vis Bentham), social surveillance is horizontal and diffuse rather than hierarchical and centralized.[66] This form of complicit surveillance can rightfully be called an "omniopticon," where "the many watch the many"

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[64] Jerome E. Dobson and Peter F. Fisher, "The Panopticon's Changing Geography," *Geographical Review* 97, no. 3 (July 2007): 307-323.

[65] Kevin Haggerty, "Tear Down the Walls: On Demolishing the Panopticon," in *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond*, ed. David Lyon (Portland: Willan, 2006), 23. Similarly, Lyon calls for "post-panoptic" models of surveillance. See also Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance: A Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 52-75.

[66] Alice E. Marwick, "The Public Domain: Social Surveillance in Everyday Life," *Surveillance & Society* 9, no. 4 (January 2012): 378-393. Marwick equates *social surveillance* with similar terms used by other theorists to describe practices that are facilitated by the digitization of personal information on social media: *lateral surveillance*, *participatory surveillance*, and *social searching*. For collections on Bentham, see Janet Semple, *Bentham's Prison: A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) and Miran Bozovic, *Jeremy Bentham: The Panopticon Writings* (London: Verso, 1995).

and location information is produced and volunteered with the intent to be seen by others.[67] Various uses of social media such as location-based smartphone apps constitute a type of intentional movement Matthew Wilson calls *conspicuous mobility*, eliciting comparisons to Veblen.[68]

As bodies become increasingly mobile and social relations and spatial identities more fluid, the panoptic model of surveillance – where the inspector had to be present with the surveilled at least some of the time – becomes outdated.[69] Following Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon, we inhabit a post-panoptical world where inspectors can "slip away, escaping to [the] unreachable realms" of bureaucratic institutions where there is no real possibility of mutual engagement.[70] Security becomes future-focused, attempting to monitor what *might* happen, using digital technologies and statistical reasoning, by tracking and profiling, taking the form of the so-called No-Fly List, to name one example.[71]

This list of names of individuals forbidden from air travel to, from, or within the United States actually dates from before September 11, 2001, but became subject to scrutiny and controversy after a number of high-profile false positives where the names of would-be passengers matched those on the official list. One such matching name is that of University of Maryland art professor Hasan Elahi who, after repeatedly experiencing difficulty at airports, chose to publicly disclose his location on his personal website

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[67] Nathan Jurgenson, "Review of Ondi Timoner's *We Live in Public*," *Surveillance & Society* 8, no. 3, (January 2011): 374-378.
[68] Matthew W. Wilson, "Location-Based Services, Conspicuous Mobility, and the Location-Aware Future," *Geoforum* 43, no. 6 (2012): 1266-1275.
[69] Because many of these voluntary forms of location monitoring are more diffuse – groups of watchers and watched scattered across physical space, older models of top-down surveillance relying on Bentham (and particularly Foucault's interpretation of Bentham) don't fit neatly with the ways hobbyists or artists have played with systems of geolocation.
[70] Bauman and Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance*, 4.
[71] Ibid, 5.

numerous times each day in order to critique the increase in state surveillance, but also to comment on how willing many people are to publicly disclose personal information online. "I like to think of it as aggressive compliance," he said in a 2015 interview. "I've always been fascinated with Magellan and the concept of circumnavigation: going far enough in one direction to end up in the other."[72] Elahi's personal website displays a series of rotating photographs paired with a Google Earth image of the location where Elahi last updated his information. The images depict mundane scenes in his experience: hotel beds, restaurant meals, parking lots, toilets, vending machines, billboards, and other everyday things. Sometimes the images are accompanied by a timestamp or set of latitude/longitude coordinates or numbers from an ATM withdrawal receipt, and nearly all are entirely devoid of people.[73]

POETICS OF GEOLOCATION

Though generally not as self-aware as Elahi's self-documentation project, numerous platforms and activities allow people to play with the concept of geolocation and location monitoring. For example, smartphone apps such as Endomondo, Runtastic, and Strava allow users to track their own movement based on GPS data, usually in the context of jogging or cycling, and share their data through social media. As noted earlier, Foursquare encourages people to "check in" to specific locations to see if any acquaintances are also there, the most visits earning one the title of "mayor."[74]

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[72] Laura C. Mallonee, "Artist Stalks Himself So the FBI Doesn't Have to," *Hyperallergic*, July 29, 2015, http://hyperallergic.com/225798/artist-stalks-himself-so-the-fbi-doesnt-have-to.
[73] Elahi's website, "Tracking Transience," can be viewed at elahi.umd.edu/track, accessed March 1, 2016.
[74] For the cumulative aspects of Foursquare, see Alison Gazzard, "Location, Location, Location: Collecting Space and Place in Mobile Media," *Convergence* 17, no. 4 (November 2011): 405-417.

Geocaching allows for some of the same features of bodily tracking. Not long after its inception in 2000, participants introduced items called “travel bugs” inscribed with an attached or imprinted six-digit code that allows users to record their movement as they are picked up and deposited from cache to cache. The same system later included window decals (resembling a cross between a barcode and a scarab beetle) that allow geocachers to track the movement of their vehicles, and various patches and buttons with the same type of code create the capability for marking the movement of one’s body.[75] Some geocachers have gone as far as tattooing their particular six-digit code, inscribing the body with tracking capabilities. The codes can only be connected to existing geocaches—a high-tech way to say “I was here.” These particular forms of location monitoring are open to forms of play that are only beginning to be realized as people experiment with movement and geolocation, intentionally moving through space in a particular pattern so that their tracings create images or words – something not possible before the development of GPS technology.

Geolocative technologies have been used for artistic purposes even before the federal restrictions on the accuracy of such devices was lifted in 2000. Artist Laura Kurgan was one of the first to experiment with the new technology, placing a stationary GPS receiver on the roof of the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona in 1995 for a piece she titled *You Are Here Museu*. Being subject to intentional inaccuracy because of the limitations placed upon the navigation system at the time, the result showed the GPS receiver as appearing in multiple positions while remaining fixed. Kurgan did this to demonstrate the fact that “Even standing still, we operate in a number of overlapping and

[75] See www.geocaching.com/track, accessed February 27, 2016.

incommensurable networks, and so in a number of places, at once."[76] Seeking to demonstrate similar limitations even in a supposedly more accurate version of geolocation, a 2012 project by artist Julian Oliver titled *Border Bumping* takes what he describes tentatively as "dislocative media." Smartphone tracking applications collect location data of individuals in close proximity to national borders. For instance, Oliver explains, "a user is in Germany but her device reports she is in France. The *Border Bumping* server will take this report literally and the French border is redrawn accordingly. The ongoing collection and rendering of these disparities results in an ever evolving record of infra-structurally antagonized territory," what he calls "tele-cartography." The project highlights inconsistencies and ambiguities in the systems of geolocation and the destabilization of borders and points to a "blurring of political boundaries through connectivity."[77]

These artistic projects critique the ways in which geolocation may alter our experience of space, but others address the ways in which landscapes themselves are changed in response to tracking apps and satellite maps. Artist Molly Dilworth creates large paintings on New York rooftops that can only be seen clearly by orbiting satellites. She describes her *Paintings for Satellites* series as "physical paintings for digital space" that play with the notion of rooftop as bland empty spaces where little else exists but water towers, ventilation ducts, and air conditioning units. This possibility has attracted the attention of advertisers, notably when a Target store near Chicago's O'Hare Airport painted its logo on the roof of its building in 2006 so that viewers using Google Earth could identify

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76 Alex Terzich, "Instruments of Uncertainty," in Abrams and Hall, 110.

77 Borderbumping.net, summarized in Jonah Brucker-Cohen, "Locative Media Revisited," *Rhizome.org*, March 26, 2014, http://rhizome.org/editorial/2014/mar/26/locative-media-revisited.

its store online.[78] In early 2015, a street art collective known as Indecline spent several days in California's Mojave Desert creating what they claim is the world's largest illegal graffiti piece in the world. Using a 3,100 foot long abandoned military airstrip as their canvas, the collective painted the phrase "This land was our land" with industrial paint sprayers, creating a message that can clearly be seen from space (or will be when Google updates their satellite images for the area).[79]

Drawing on the concepts of psychogeography, the work of Jeremy Wood plays with the notion of space and movement, illustrating what he calls a "personal cartography." The graphic representations are the route of his body through space. In his 2005 work *Skywriting*, Wood walked the route of a Herman Melville phrase, spelling out "It is not down in any map; true places never are" along London's Prime Meridian, the site of an older cartographic paradigm. (As it turns out, the Prime Meridian, designated in 1851, is more than 300 feet from its satellite-defined counterpart). Limited by the obstructions present in physical space, Wood's letters are legible yet imprecise, entirely at the mercy of the grid.[80] Similarly, performance artist Yasushi Takahashi created the world's largest marriage proposal in 2010 by taking six months to walk the entire length of Japan by creating a path that said "marry me."[81] More recently, San Francisco resident Claire

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[78] Ibid. Several companies now offer to paint logos on rooftops, what one company calls "the final frontier" in advertising. See www.roofads.com, accessed January 22, 2014.

[79] From http://thisisindecline.com/flicks/indecline-project-runway-2015, accessed February 28, 2016. Indecline claims the surface area of the work exceeds 200,000 square feet. As of early March 2016 the piece does not yet appear on Google Earth images, though an earlier, smaller work near Las Vegas titled *Wheel of Misfortune* does.

[80] Jeremy Wood, "Skywriting" and "Can't Be Elsewhere When GPS Drawing," in Abrams and Hall, 268-275. The first of these two pieces is an interview discussing Wood's rationale for playing with geolocative technology, the second is a narrative of Wood's creation of the Melville phrase across the Prime Meridian.

[81] See Chris O'Brien, "Meet the Japanese Artist who Made the World's Largest GPS Drawing for His Marriage Proposal," *Venturebeat*, November 17, 2014, http://venturebeat.com/2014/11/17/meet-the-japanese-artist-who-made-the-worlds-largest-gps-drawing-for-his-marriage-proposal.

Wyckoff gained some notoriety by using a movement-tracking exercise app to "draw" shapes with her jogging routes around the city, often creating tracks depicting penises or a hand with an upraised middle finger.[82]

The effect of each of these examples—experimenting with the capabilities and limitations of GPS receivers to create art, painting images and messages large enough to be visible in satellite images, intentionally moving through space so that the trace resembles a word or image—is, in the words of Jonah Brucker-Cohen, to "use locative technology critically, opening up closed systems, making its effects visible, and reconfiguring our relationship to it."[83] These practices not only engage with space but the technologies that enable and facilitate the tracking of bodies and objects, and these playful, artistic forms of resistance seem to be the most common type of response to these top-down systems of surveillance.

Movement tracking, which began as monitoring objects and came to include bodies, has broad implications for the privacy and security of individuals. Tracking has become more and more sophisticated with advances in technology, and these artistic responses to geolocation data and surveillance of mobile bodies in space play with notions of who is watching and why – engaging in what might be called a "poetics of geolocation." These playful examples critique the use of digital technologies and the ways they are used to monitor and track groups of individuals who experience differing degrees of freedom of mobility.

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[82] See Erin Gloria Ryan, "Female Runner Who Uses Nike+ to Draw Dicks is an American Hero," *Jezebel*, August 5, 2014, http://jezebel.com/female-runner-who-uses-nike-to-draw-dicks-is-an-americ-1616462580.
[83] From Brucker-Cohen.

If current trends are any indication, location monitoring will continue to be more common (some might use the word *intrusive*) as it becomes more precise. While these particular forms of mobility assume a measure of privilege and freedom unattainable to, say, those under house arrest, the fact remains that both voluntary self-monitoring using GPS technology *and* involuntary forms of surveillance such as ankle-worn monitoring devices have similar ends: normalizing surveillance of the mobile human body and essentially reducing the human to an object, statistic, or point of data. In the context of house arrest, therefore, "home" is no longer a place defined by familial ties or practices of domesticity, but is transformed into an abstract space in which a particular body (or technically just an electronic device) must exist during specific prescribed times.

Almost comically, punitive monitoring devices have proliferated to the extent that many agencies cannot sort through the avalanche of alerts that are often nothing worse than a dead battery, lost satellite contact, or someone arriving home late from work. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, to name just one agency, received over 28,000 alerts in April 2013, averaging 944 alerts per day.[84] Inundated with such an excess of data, parole officers cannot easily distinguish between a removed monitor and a false alarm, rendering the system somewhat ineffective.

But perhaps the most significant development in the ways these technologies have affected our relationship to place is the proliferation of personal tracking and monitoring devices available on the market. A company called Soloshot released a product in 2012 that includes a camera mounted on a motorized tripod that tracks the movement of a

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[84] Douglas A. Berman, "Intriguing AP Review of the Challenges of GPS Tracking," *Sentencing Law and Policy* (blog), July 30, 2013, sentencing.typepad.com/sentencing_law_and_policy/criminal_sentences_alternatives/page/4. Originally from Associated Press news feed, July 28, 2013.

transmitter attached to an armband. Originally developed as a way for surfers to film themselves, Soloshot cameras can track a target within 2,000 feet moving as fast as 140 miles per hour. “Filming, editing, and sharing your life has never been easier,” claims the company’s website, “Now, go put your life in perspective!” In the excited language of the company’s press kit, Soloshot “enables and empowers anyone and everyone to live life to the fullest, to get out from behind the camera, to be truly immersed *in* the moment, and to be able to share their lives too.”[85]

Paralleling the rise in location-aware services has been the rise in personal fitness trackers and biometric measuring devices. It is worth mentioning that Garmin, the largest company producing GPS receivers, was the first to market an activity tracker. First released in 2003, the Garmin Forerunner can, in its newer versions, measure distance, speed, heart rate, time, and number of calories burned. Fitbit, perhaps the best-known of these devices, became commercially available in 2007. Close to 15 million wearable fitness trackers were sold globally in 2013 and the number is projected to reach 100 million in 2018.[86] The popularity of the Forerunner, Fitbit, and Apple Watch are clear evidence that tracking and monitoring are not only becoming more commonplace; they are becoming more intimate as well.[87]

Early iterations of punitive location monitoring still afforded individuals some measure of privacy and freedom, much in the ways the Harvard researchers had envisioned in 1968 where mobility is retained insofar as the individual checks in only at prescribed

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[85] From http://shop.soloshot.com, accessed March 24, 2016. Italics present in the original source.
[86] Haroon Siddique, “Fitness Trackers Enjoy Healthy Sales Despite Lack of Evidence They Work,” *The Guardian* (UK), December 4, 2015.
[87] See Lisa Nelson, *America Identified: Biometric Technology and Society* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2011).

times. When combined with GPS technology this monitoring becomes more complicated: mobility itself is not necessarily restricted, but there may be consequences for being, to borrow a phrase from cultural geographer Tim Cresswell, "out of place."[88] The continued social implications of tracking technology, both for mobile bodies and trackable objects, will remain to be seen.

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[88] Much of Cresswell's work is concerned with the social policing of bodies in particular locations. See Tim Cresswell, *In Place, Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

Conclusion

This study has examined four distinct ways people have encountered and interacted with place and explored how these experiences are impacted by certain technologies, paying close attention to the human experience of mobility. While I believe critical formulations of space and place are sufficient articulations of the differences between objective physical environments and lived realities, they insufficiently account for the importance of physical mobility. Yi-Fu Tuan, whose influence is apparent throughout this study, when discussing the relationship between time and place tends to do so in terms of dwelling or remaining static. Even his discussion of Los Angeles as "the automobile city" in *Topophilia* does so mostly in terms of architecture and even remarks that the streets are largely devoid of people.[1] Place is encountered by the mobile human body, whether on foot or through other means, and our understanding of place must acknowledge the numerous, often overlapping mobilities that occur in, through, and across place.

Physical movement occurs in space *and* time, and critical conversations about place have already acknowledged the temporal element. More than forty years ago, Kevin Lynch wrote a book articulating the relationships between time and place, finding that as a dynamic site connecting past, present, and future, *place* implies chronology.[2] Yet other theorists, particularly those who view place and landscape as subject to symbolic

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[1] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976) contains very little mention of mobility, save for chapter 9, "Time in Experiential Space." Tuan's discussion of Los Angeles in *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), is on pages 189-191.

[2] Kevin Lynch, *What Time is This Place?* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1972). For another analysis of these same intersections, see John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995), chapter 1, "Time and Space in the Consumption of Place."

interpretation such as D.W. Meinig and Peirce Lewis, tend to imply that place is static rather than dynamic. Meinig, writing less than a decade after Lynch, uses a semiotic framework for understanding landscapes. Though he acknowledges the ambiguity of the term and the layered complexity of landscape-as-object, the physical spaces he describes are fixed: multiple "readers" of a textual landscape, even if their interpretations differ, are still reading the same referent.[3] While I believe landscapes can carry symbolic meanings, the treatment of place and landscape in this dissertation aligns more with geographers like Doreen Massey, whose understanding of space and place connects more closely physical location to time, showing *place* to harbor a multiplicity of ever-shifting trajectories.[4] However, this view of place is troubling for those who prefer clear definitions and meanings of the places they encounter and inhabit.

Along with instability, fluid social relations, and the blurring of categorical distinctions, several critics point to mobile flows as a central characteristic of postmodernity. But too often these articulations of mobility tend to obscure the human aspect in formulations of mobile labor, migration, and capital.[5] A fundamental idea in this

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[3] See the introduction to D.W. Meinig's edited collection, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1-10.

[4] See Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), particularly chapter 11, "Slices Through Space," and chapter 13, "Throwntogetherness: The Politics of the Event of Place."

[5] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991) finds an important element of postmodernity to be a decentralized global capitalism. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1996) points to mobile flows of capital and labor. Though the word "postmodernity" does not appear in the title, Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) discusses the erosion of local identities as a result of mass migration brought about by economic globalization. Each of these texts points to a set of characteristics including instability, fluidity, and uncertainty that describe everyday life under postmodernity.

study is that mobility is a crucial component to human identity and it is too limiting to view these forms of movement as an abstraction absent of lived experience.

Many current discourses, especially those influenced by Foucault, tend to describe human beings as bodies, reducing them to a quantifiable abstract. We cannot ignore the human dimension to everyday life. This is, I believe, one of the shortcomings of John Urry's *Mobilities*. Whereas Cresswell's discussion of mobility in *On the Move* uses the lived experiences of humans as a starting point, Urry focuses first on systems and transportation networks that seem to function with or without the presence of humans.[6] In discussing place and modes of transportation that facilitate mobility, I have attempted to keep the *human* central, exploring not only how people move through space but also the reasons why, and what this means for actual people instead of aggregate masses of bodies. I view mobility as an interrelation among people, place, and technology that shapes human beings and the physical environment. Following one of the central components to actor-network theory, places are *made* and in a way places *make us*, but neither of these processes can occur without our physical movement through space.

The primary attempt in this study is to demonstrate how and why place is used in different ways by different people through various acts of mobility. Many of these practices, I believe, emerge as a response to postmodernity, even if their participants are unaware of larger structural processes. They are attempts to create stable meanings, definitions, and identities, to make known the unknown, to provide people with a sense of

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[6] See John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), and Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York: Routledge, 2006). This is not to say that Urry ignores the human dimension; he just does not centralize it.

agency and autonomy, and give aspects of permanence to the ephemeral all in order to resist the destabilization, uncertainty, and sense of alienation and powerlessness that have intensified over the last four decades. The primary examples in each chapter demonstrate the meanings behind the acts of mobility.

As the increased attention devoted to historic highways indicates, the roadscape has become a site for remembering and recreating a specific past. I do not believe it to be coincidental that the population celebrating the centennial of the Lincoln Highway was overwhelmingly male, elderly, and exclusively white (and, judging by the response to the jokes told by the Will Rogers impersonator, politically conservative), and I believe their tactics of preservation are subtle attempts to celebrate a mythologized past in which the various crises and social upheavals of the last five decades (the civil rights movement, antiwar protests, feminism, political correctness, and the threat of terrorism) did not occur. In the face of an uncertain present, the knowable past (even if partly fictional) is comforting.

Place collecting not only flattens out hierarchies of place (and can sometimes invert the distinction between space and place), it turns place into a collectible object and a constitutive element of personal identity. Understanding postmodern formulations of identity as fluid and unstable, place collecting can be interpreted as fulfilling the need to carve out a distinct identity: I've been to all these places; I have acquired experience and knowledge; this is who I am; here is evidence to prove it. With the Degree Confluence Project, the collective goal—documenting the landscape at each of the intersections of latitude and longitude lines—is guided by the desire to make sense of a mapping paradigm that has come to dominate navigation, yet remains unseen. Visits to degree confluences are attempts to reclaim objectively defined spaces and to transform them into something knowable.

As the third chapter shows, the impulse to leave legible traces of our presence is hardly new. The fundamental message of graffiti has always been *I was here* but for most of history the "I" has been anonymous; the author's identity didn't need clarification. Around 1968 (perhaps not coincidentally just as modernity is starting to thaw into postmodernity), the youths in Philadelphia and New York who began creating legible traces of their physical presence largely did so in order to transcend the social limitations of race, class, and neighborhood, but also to publicly reaffirm their own existence to themselves, to each other, and to outsiders. Their version of declaring "I was here" required the inclusion of a name to complete the statement. The fixation on quantity by postmodern graffiti writers and the idea to leave one's mark on mobile objects are, I believe, a realization that one of the most effective ways to declare one's presence is to mimic the strategies of advertising, and the practice of writing graffiti is a conscious effort to neutralize advertising's command of space.[7]

Finally, the increasingly common forms of location monitoring and tracking are how we locate ourselves (and are located by others) in place. The growth in tracking

[7] A concise articulation of this idea comes from Shepard Fairey's "Obey Giant" manifesto: "Many stickers have been peeled down by people who were annoyed by the sticker which they consider to be an eye sore [sic] and an act of petty vandalism, which is ironic considering the number of commercial graphic images that everyone in American society is assaulted with daily." From an undated photocopied pamphlet in the author's collection. I chose not to focus on this form of street art in my discussion of graffiti because as reproducible images, these stickers, stencils, and posters can conceivably be put up by anyone, transforming the underlying message from *I was here* into *this image is here*.

objects, aided greatly by technological developments, is in many ways a byproduct of economic globalization. The parallel rise of tracking people within systems of surveillance reduces individuals to bodies or points of data. The various forms of playing with geolocation that appear in the fourth chapter resist this dehumanization and give people (at least those who are able to do so) an opportunity to reclaim agency by the way they move through space. Jeremy Wood's GPS tracks, Claire Wyckoff's jogging routes, and other playful practices critique existing forms of top-down surveillance but never fully subvert them because these movements are entirely voluntary, as is the choice to document and make them public. Indeed, creative uses of geolocation may serve to make comparatively insidious forms of location monitoring like house arrest seem normal.

Importantly, many of the practices of place described in this study are acts of poetics (play within an existing system) or bricolage (repurposing existing objects based on individual needs and desires). For example, Groundspeak, the company behind geocaching, at one time sold a T-shirt with the phrase "I use multi-million dollar satellites to find Tupperware in the woods. What's your hobby?" This is a statement suggesting the practice combines two simultaneous bricolages: using satellites originally intended for military navigation for ludic purposes and using food storage containers to hide small trinkets and a logbook outdoors.

But activities like geocaching are far from trivial. After all, people go to great lengths to locate these hidden Tupperware containers. And the examples of place collecting appearing in the second chapter, no matter how quixotic or extreme they may seem to outsiders, are deeply meaningful to those with such pursuits. And leaving evidence of a past presence, whether on a boxcar or bathroom stall, is an impulse at least as old as writing. Each of these activities, in its own way, remakes place into something that reshapes the mobile individual, and the practices of place described in this study shape our understanding of what it means to be mobile and therefore what it means to exist.

Looking ahead, there will undoubtedly be new technologies that facilitate and enable human interactions with the physical environment and shape our perceptions of what it means to be *in place*. Consider the growth of GPS devices. At around $2500 in the early 1990s, they were prohibitively expensive, not especially accurate, and often had difficulty maintaining a clear signal between receiver and satellite. After the accuracy limitations imposed by selective availability were removed in 2000 their use increased dramatically, and to date nearly one billion GPS-equipped devices have been sold worldwide.[8] But even before this increase, people began using them in ways different from their intended purposes – notably Laura Kurgan's 1995 art piece *You Are Here Museu*. Digital humanities scholars in coming years should pay close attention to creative and artistic uses (and perhaps "misuses") of technologies, especially in their early stages.

WAYS OF MOVEMENT

The practices of place described in this study, each in its own way, expose tensions between subjective and objective understandings of place. Furthermore, these examples complicate what other scholars have written about how and why people move through the physical environment. Tim Ingold, whose discussion of traces helps frame the third chapter

[8] This number grew substantially after the introduction of GPS-equipped smartphones in 2007.

of this study, describes how certain ways of movement have changed relationships between mobility and place. Ingold begins one of his chapters with a scene from Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, wherein the Corporal traces a line in the air with his walking stick. Much like the meandering narrative of Sterne's nine volume novel, the Corporal's line curves, wanders, and loops around. This gesture, an ephemeral trace represented by a fluid, curved line, would have been lost forever had Sterne not recorded it.

To demonstrate his point, Ingold then cuts the Corporal's line into short segments, drawing a dot at regular intervals, then reconnects the dots with straight lines (erasing the evidence of fluid movement), calling the new approximation a "chain of connections between fixed points." The result still resembles the original trace, only now it is deconstructed into a series of individual points instead of a single curved line. "What we see is no longer the *trace of a gesture*," writes Ingold, "but an assembly of *point-to-point connectors*. The composition stands as a finished object, an artefact. Its constituent lines join things up, but they do not grow or develop." What Ingold suggests in this exercise is that the line, "once the trace of a continuous gesture…has been fragmented – under the sway of modernity – into a succession of points or dots."[9] The result is less a single fluid line (mimicking how people actually move through space) and more a series of point-to-point lines that resembles a page of connect-the-dots.

[9] Ingold, 74-75. Italics in original.

According to Ingold, modern thinking, which is informed by rationality and efficiency, tends to think of the physical environment in this "connect-the-dots" way: as a series of identifiable places and destinations that can be mapped, visited, and (to use an example appearing earlier in this study) collected. This idea is summed up by Adrianna de Souza e Silva and Larissa Hjorth, who claim that during most movement between places, the space traveled is "often ignored…urban spaces [are] mostly used as circulation spaces, where one keeps constantly moving around, with the goal to arrive at specific locations, but often, the space in between [lacks] meaning."[10]

This is the fundamental concept to Foursquare, which only acknowledges set locations and nothing in between. Alison Gazzard discusses how location-based media have a tendency to focus exclusively on locations as destinations at the expense of what lies between. She writes, "The user of Foursquare deliberately stalks the streets, trying to find new places to check in. The act of wandering becomes obsolete, as the passing surroundings are no longer valued in view of the prize of finding a place to check in."[11] This perception of space isolates certain locations at the expense of others, favors direct routes between destinations, and physical movement itself becomes guided by a sense of efficiency.[12]

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[10] Adrianna de Souza e Silva and Larissa Hjorth, "Playful Urban Spaces: A Historical Approach to Mobile Games," *Simulation and Gaming* 40, no. 5 (2009): 609.
[11] Gazzard, 408.
[12] For a discussion of this concept on a smaller scale, and the particular ways Taylorism has been applied to the domestic sphere, see Tim Cresswell, *On the Move* chapter 4, "The Production of Mobility in the Workplace and the Home.

Because understandings of movement and place are culturally informed, conventional wisdom might suggest that shifts in how and why we encounter place, or find ourselves in place, reflect a changing set of cultural values. For example, Ingold contrasts the ways of movement of people native to New Guinea, Malaysia, and arctic Canada, whom he describes as *wayfaring*, with *transport*, which he interprets as ways of movement guided by rational, geometric, and prescriptive routes that became increasingly common with modernity and the era of European exploration and colonization. Wayfaring favors an experiential understanding of place; transport follows predetermined maps and routes, and while wayfaring is characterized by active engagement with one's surroundings and the coupling of locomotion and perception, transport-oriented travel is concerned primarily with a destination. What lies between origin and destination is less important to travelers moving in this way. Consider the difference between a nomadic tribe following reindeer and a cargo ship sailing from port to port – the former moves fluidly *with* the contours of the physical environment while the latter moves *across* it, favoring fixed, direct, and efficient routes determined by scientific rationalism.

This difference is evident in the two primary systems of highways in the United States, each of which facilitates its own type of driving. The earlier systems of auto trails and Federal highways generally followed contours in the landscape as they connected places (which may be why some drivers believe older highways to be more "scenic"). The Interstate Highway system, however, was built to make long-distance automobile travel as efficient as possible, sometimes at great cost and effort. For example, there was no existing highway across the San Rafael Swell in south-central Utah before Interstate 70 was built in the late 1960s and today the 110-mile stretch is the longest in the entire Interstate Highway System without any facilities or accommodations for drivers. And among the proposals for routing Interstate 40 across the Mojave Desert was a 1963 plan (thankfully, rejected) to detonate twenty-two nuclear bombs buried under the Bristol Mountains to instantly create a channel two miles long in which to build a highway, rather than go around the mountains.[13] It is this paradigm of efficiency that dictates much of the mobility in the modern Western world.

At first glance, it would seem that place collecting and other forms of movement described in this study tend to reduce places to a series of individual destinations irrespective of the spaces between, falling into Ingold's category of transport-oriented movement. But Ingold describes these ways of movement from the perspective of an anthropologist, not a geographer. Whether it be visiting a piece of obsolete highway, a county line, a geocache, or a court-ordered location monitoring station, destinations might be the catalyst for acts of mobility, but the majority of mobility occurs in those points between. And even for those who are seemingly fixated on reaching particular destinations (such as dedicated place collectors), narratives of the journey are still extremely important.

Take, for example, the Degree Confluence Project. Contributors are required to provide a series of photographs taken in each cardinal direction from the confluence as well as a narrative of the journey, some of which are quite extensive and take great care to

[13] Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 170. Lewis claims the "nuclear option" would have saved $8 million in construction costs and greatly pleased the Atomic Energy Commission, who were invested in finding civil applications for nuclear bombs.

reveal minute details about the landscape and the areas between the starting point and the destination. A visit to 15°N 13°W in eastern Senegal by a group of four confluence hunters in March 2013 suggests there was much to experience in this liminal space:

> As we proceeded on foot through this natural landscape, we had to zigzag around thorny Acacia bushes. We followed a maze of cattle trails through the tall, golden Andropogon grasses…Our progress was slow, as we stopped to take pictures, admiring the flowering Adenium obesum plant…By noon, the temperature surpassed 40 degrees C. Every kilometer or so, we would take a break in the shade of a giant baobab tree…We reached the Confluence under the blazing midday sun. After shooting the required photographs, we rested quietly in the shade of a Boscia bush, taking time to appreciate our unique location in a very remote, unspoiled natural landscape.[14]

According to their entry, the group had to hike 8 km between the nearest road and the confluence, and it is clear from the narrative that neither speed nor efficiency (in spatial terms, traveling the most direct route) were of particular importance. Rather than make a beeline to the spot where the GPS would zero out, they meander, rest often, and reflect. The group was compelled to visit the remote location because no other confluence hunter had been there previously, but for them the reward was more than just the confluence; it was the experience of moving through the space between the road and the destination. This is not unlike the thinking behind the Extra Miler Club motto: The shortest distance between two points is no fun.

[14] The full narrative can be found at http://confluence.org/confluence.php?lat=15&lon=-13, accessed April 29, 2016.

INTERRELATIONS

The four main themes that occur throughout this study are *place*, *object*, *agent*, and *trace*. Put in other terms, they might be defined as physical location, material thing, human actor, and evidence of a person having been there. Each connects to and acts upon the other three as in a matrix:

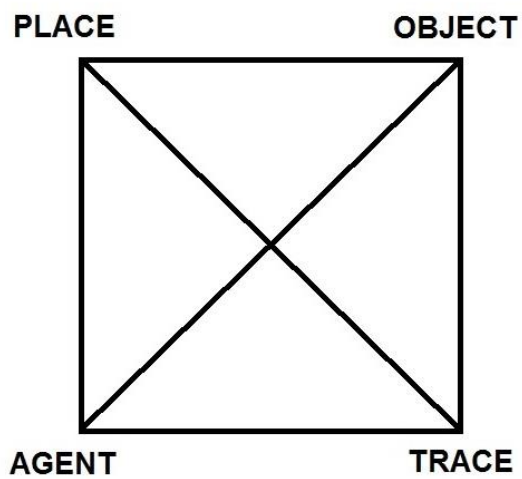

Fig. 1 – Practices of Place Matrix

The primary examples found in each chapter demonstrate the relationships between each of these four themes. As a particular roadscape, the Lincoln Highway is a distinct place. Its century-old seedling mile in Grand Island, Nebraska, is at once a specific place, a material object, and a trace of the past upon which agents (here, historic highway enthusiasts) visit and perhaps reenact their visions of history. To the members of the Extra Miler Club, a county line is a particularly important place, demarcated by a road sign, and proof of the visit often takes the form of a photograph, which in this case acts as both object and trace. For someone dedicated to leaving their mark publicly, the trace, inscribed upon another object, is the record of an agent having been in a particular place. Finally, in the case of someone ordered to wear a monitoring device, the check-in point is of extreme importance. Though this type of individual is largely stripped of agency (at least in terms of freedom of movement), the ankle monitor as an object sends a trace/signal revealing the wearer to be in the proper place at the prescribed time. In short, place, object, agent, and trace are what constitute each of the practices of place examined herein.

Of these four concepts, *trace* is certainly the least explored in scholarship. As a record of past events, the trace is proof (or at the very least, evidence) of a mobile individual having been in a particular place. It is though the material trace that we make our presence known. It could be an inscription, a signature on a logbook, a photograph of a person in an identifiable location, or many other things. Thinking more broadly, the trace need not be a material object – after all, what is memory if not an intangible trace of the past? And certainly memories are often directly tied to material objects that function as mnemonic aids and connect people to the past, such as a photograph that can instantly spark memories of the time and place in which it was taken. There are numerous opportunities for future scholarship to tease out the nuances between various types of traces and the methods and reasons they are created. If accumulating experiences is the fundamental element to driving historic highways, attempting to visit as many set locations as possible, or draw monikers on boxcars, perhaps it is more accurate to think of place collecting as trace collecting.

In this interdisciplinary study, I have drawn connections between place, material objects, and people, focusing on what it means to be in place. While centralizing the individual in geography can result in theories about space and place that can be too subjective, I believe it is crucial to keep human beings present. The influence of postmodern theory in geography, certainly an important intervention, runs the risk focusing on totalizing forces at the expense of human autonomy. Not that scholarship needs to be positivistic—indeed we need to discuss these discourses and structures if we are to critique and perhaps dismantle the forces that create the conditions that allow for their perpetuation—but people are much more than bodies lacking agency and geography must retain humanism if it is to remain relevant. With the notable exception of punitive monitoring devices, the acts of mobility appearing throughout this study describe how people create for themselves a sense of certainty and purpose that resist the uncertainty and instability that characterize the present. In the face of unstable identities, these practices of place construct and reaffirm our identity and give meaning to what it means to be in place, acknowledging that *where we've been* is an important element of *who we are*.

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